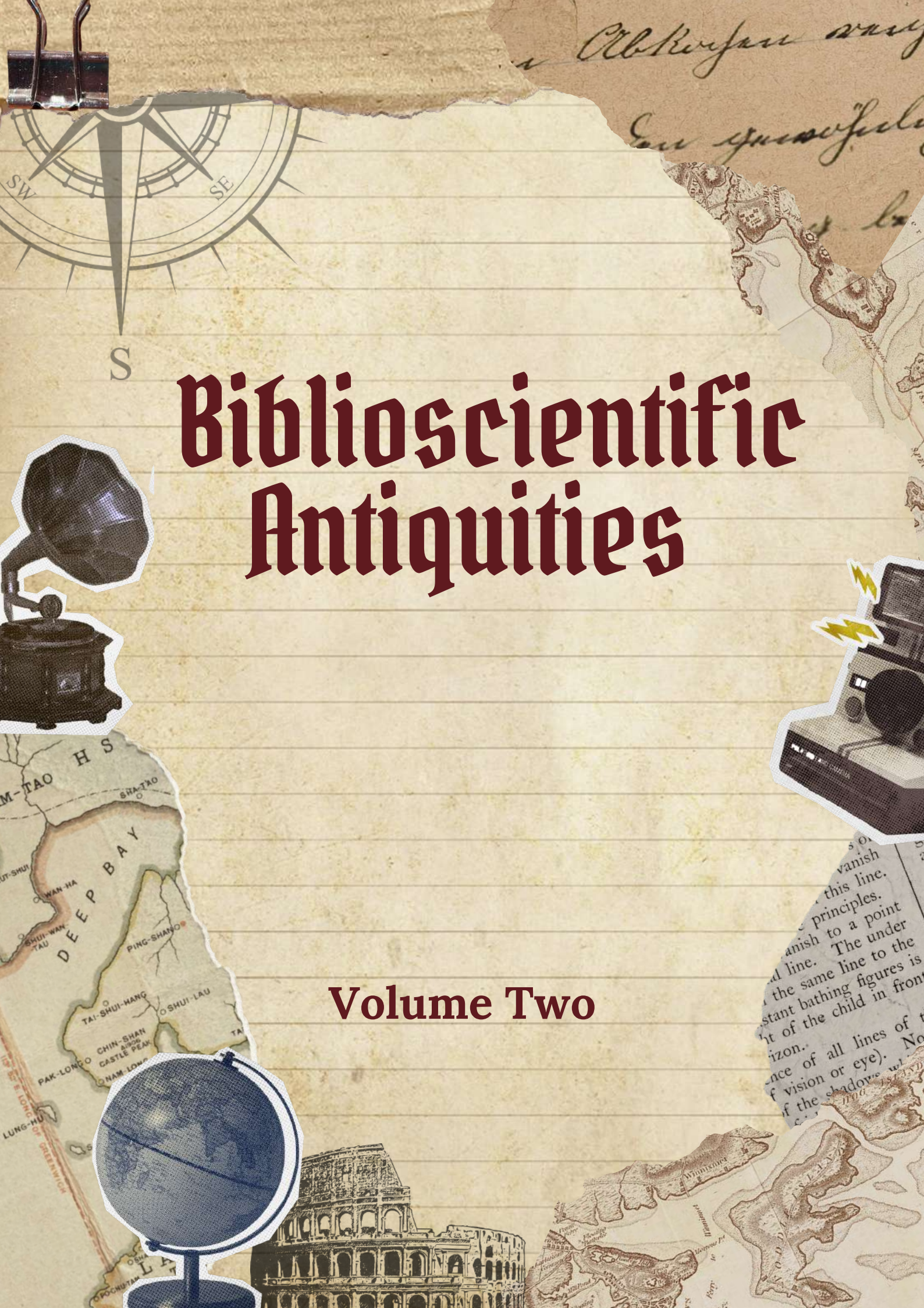


Biblioscientific Antiquities

Volume Two





By

Bahati Innocent

THE DAWN AND DUSK OF DECEPTION



By Bahati Innocent

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Lucky Bill Omondi, Maureen Beren, Nelly Brandy Oduol, Ibrahim Tendera and Jane Mumbi

Dedicated to

All The people in search for the message of truth from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

“The world today is filled with uncertainty and perplexities. Men have been overwhelmed with pestilences, disasters, fear and everyone is longing for relief. In the midst of the uncertainty that exists in our world, one thing is certain and that is the glorious second coming of our Saviour. Of all the promises that are given in the scriptures, it stands as the sum, ‘behold I come quickly, be watchful and wait.’ But before the second coming takes place, the scriptures inform us that certain events must take place. We are told that the day of the Lord will not come except there be a ‘falling away’ (from the truth) and the man of sin will be revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3). This means that Satan will work with all wonder and deceit to deceive if possible even the very elect (Matthew 24:24). Fortunately for us, God has not left us in the dark for Satan to deceive us easily. The Bible has clearly exposed the wiles of the evil one so that ‘we shall not be ignorant of his devices’ (2 Corinthians 3:11). The author of this book has taken much effort to expose the mysterious rise and ultimate fall of error. It is my prayer that you dear reader shall be blessed and be as wise as serpents as we fight with this serpent of old called the devil and Satan. As you read, keep in mind the words of Mrs. White, ‘There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices.’ GC 516.3” – LUCKY BILL OMONDI

THE WORLD IS BROKEN, IT'S REELING TO AND FRO LIKE A DRUNKARD, AND SHALL BE REMOVED LIKE A COTTAGE; AND THE TRANSGRESSION THEREOF SHALL BE HEAVY UPON IT; AND IT SHALL FALL, AND NOT RISE AGAIN. ISAIAH 24:20

Preface

There sits today in rulership of this fallen world order one who has grown ancient in evil, cunning in subtlety, and cruel in deceit. He waged the first war of the universe in Heaven, and subsequently brought conflict to earth. He filled all heaven with discord and the earth with death, and with great sorrow. He deceptively challenged every transparent purpose of the Creator, and even coveted the throne of the Eternal, planning to either assume rule of the universe or if not, then to plunge it into chaos and ruin.

This menacing figure who has hijacked our planet well explains the presence of every conflict that disturbs our world today, every pestilence that afflicts humanity, every sorrow and pain and death that tortures the children of the earth. Lucifer, the former covering cherub and one-time honourable prime minister of the angelic intelligences in Heaven, has become Satan, the great adversary of our smitten world.

This powerful angel heads a vast army of unseen intelligences, the hosts of darkness who oppose in this world every beneficent purpose of our Creator the Almighty God of the universe. He especially hates the Holy One who in great condescension assumed our human nature that He might by divine power destroy the works of Satan, conquer evil and lift the terrible sentence of eternal death from our fallen race.

To speak of a throne of evil controlling this world system is no mere figure of speech, it is a grim reality. And the occupant of that throne is no mere figment of anyone's imagination. Jesus Christ ascribes to him the title of "prince of this world" John 14:30. The famed Christian apostle Paul describes him as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." Ephesians 2:2. Paul also warns us that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness....." Ephesians 6:12. John, in the book of Revelation, describes this foe as "the great dragon," that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan who deceives the whole world." Revelation 12:9

When the leader of revolt against the Eternal Creator was expelled from Heaven, expelled along with him were many other angel intelligences who had yielded to his cunning sophistries and had joined in his unworthy rebellion. This world is today their singular abode. This is because that tremendous event, which rid heaven of the fallen hosts, was followed by the tragic fall of our first parents under Satan's lies.

This historic fall let loose legions of fallen angels to bend all of their efforts and genius over many thousands of years in the work of spoiling, corrupting and ruining the once noble human family, originally created to be the crown of God's handiwork. A key element of the strategy to ruin humanity has been to lead man to blight and degrade the fair earth that was intended to be our perfect and eternal home.

The apostle Peter warns us "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. Finally, the inspired revelator says "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time." Revelation 12:12.

Satan is going to bring great deceptions to this world in these end times, to deceive as many people as he can and keep them from Christ's kingdom. Revelation 12:17 says that "the dragon" which is Satan, is "wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The remnant of this woman is God's end time church, His true followers who keep His Ten Commandments and have the testimony of Jesus. And Satan is wroth with these people, because they are doing what is right in God's eyes. So he goes to "make war" with them.

So what is Satan going to do? Is he preparing an army to fight against God's true church? Well, in a way he is preparing the leaders of the world to "fight" against God's people who refuse the beast's mark when it is

enforced, as it says in Revelation 13:15 that they will be delivered up to be killed. But what is Satan's greatest weapon in war? DECEPTION! He is the arch deceiver, a mighty foe; which is why we need to be grounded on the truth of God's Word in the Bible. This is the only way we can discern any deceptions, by knowing the truth and living according to it. Mark 13:5,22... "Take heed lest any man deceive you..... For false Christ's and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."

Like an unconscious sky-diver hurtling out of control toward the earth, we are rushing headlong toward an impact with the end time, speeding toward a collision with earth's final events. Prophetic signs reveal history is coming to a climax. As we plummet toward ground zero, many don't have a parachute on. Even more don't realize the horizon is rushing up to meet them.

But even at this late hour, God has devised a way to help us pull our rip cord. God's rescue is described in Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Note what John saw happening near the close of time: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6.

What a dramatic picture! God attempting to rescue every person on planet Earth! This angel is the first of the three John saw who issue loud proclamations over the earth. These are God's final, last-day messages – words He shouts at us, seconds from impact. God has always sent messages to warn His people of events that would affect millions. Before the Flood, God had Noah build the Ark and plead with people to take refuge in it. Before Egypt's great famine, God sent Joseph to have the Egyptians stockpile supplies to meet the famine. God wants us to be prepared for what's coming. Amos 3:7 puts it this way: Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Prophecy reveals what is coming, and Revelation's prophecies reveal what is coming especially at the end time. Revelation sends a message that something big is coming. What is this big event? Look carefully at Revelation 14 and you'll see that the third angel ends his message in verse 13. Then verse 14 describes the next event: The Son of Man returns with a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. This is the Second Coming, the final judgment, when history climaxes and all human destinies are sealed. So obviously the messages that come right before this are vitally important. They're God's last warning, telling us exactly how to open our parachutes as the end of time rushes up to meet us! Therefore, with a celerity of wildfire consuming a vast prairie, we should proclaim the love of God from the Vale of White Horse to the Himalayas mountains, from the Vale of Tempe to the Alps, from the Vale of Kashmir to the Sahara plains, from the Vale of Glamorgan to the Atlas mountains and from continent to continent till the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. This is our role as Christians in these last days and this should be our sole mission during the end time movements.

"The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones." — Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9, Page 11 (1909).

By the Author: Bahati Innocent

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CHAPTER ONE

The Dawn of Deception

Section One

The Origin of Sin and the fall of Lucifer

Prior to the ordination of the supernatural laws of astrophysics that maintain the alacritous celerity of celestial bodies, the gravitational interaction between galaxies and planets, and the interaction between matter and radiation in celestial bodies; the Most High established His throne in Heaven. This imperial place was filled with majestic splendour and the heavenly inhabitants created thereafter scintillated with an aura of God's glory. These Heavenly denizens, the angels, incessantly pledged their allegiance to the authority of God.

The angelic throng had a leader who was directly under the Son of God in authority. This angel, Lucifer, was the annointed cherub that stood in the presence of the Great Creator. This angel had unique qualities and a grand regal splendour that showed forth his beauty. These qualities made Lucifer begin to harbour the desire for self-exaltation thus regarding all his glory as pertaining to himself although it all came from God. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." (Ezekiel 28:17). The Son of God was the second in command after the Father and shared all the Divine interests with Him. Through this, Lucifer was envious of the Son of God and was therefore not contented with his position. This wasn't his character from the beginning, as all the angels together with Lucifer, lived with harmony in perfect accordance to the will of God, but now, jealousy and envy engulfing his self-dominated mind made him to seek out ways of debasing the view of Christ through his insidious artifices. His attitudinal inclination towards his self-appraisal made him think of exalting himself above the throne of the Most High. The Scripture says, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13-14).

To discredit the supremacy of Christ with presumed expertise, Satan needed support. He went about spreading claims that the law of God was unjust, and through his sly insinuations, he tried to make other angels believe that the government of God was incompetent and unjust. Some of the angels and even Christ himself tried to convince Satan of his dreadful error, till at least the evil one and his sympathizers were found in open rebellion against God Himself.

The devil made his stand clear and continued to justify himself. His pride couldn't

allow him to retract his claims and therefore he sought for open rebellion. It was now evident that the devil and his sympathizers couldn't be stopped by any peaceful means and therefore, war broke in Heaven. Christ and His angels fought against the devil; and the devil fought with his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven. And he was cast out together with his angels with him. (Revelation 12:7-9).

The results of the Fall of Lucifer were tragic. A void was left in Heaven since a third of the angels were cast out with him. To take the place of these angels, the Father and the Son decided to create the Universe, its constituents, and the Human race.

Section Two

Satan's Deception Rekindled

Love and perfection being the sole core in His insights, God created the earth and its constituents like a master artist with great skill. The earth once formless and desolate, was now beautiful with lush evergreen vegetation, flying creatures, land animals, snow-capped mountains and swimming creatures beneath the shimmering blue waters. Such was the epitome of beauty and craft ever beheld on planet Earth, and this masterpiece was crowned by the creation of man. *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Genesis 1:26*

After the creation of man, all creatures lived in harmony in the serene environment. An aura of love and tranquility encompassing Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is an indicator of the perfect peace that was round about them.

Though sinless, Adam and Eve were created with the will of choice. Therefore, to prove their allegiance to God, they had to be tested. God commanded them to eat fruits of every tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was the test that God set before them to prove their obedience. Satan learned of this test and sought of a way to make mankind fall for his deceit. His deception had to be rekindled. Under the guise of a serpent, the devil managed to deceive the woman who thereafter gave the fruit to her husband. Both ate the fruit and thus broke God's command. Adam and Eve had to bear the consequences and as a result they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. Their disobedience made mankind subject to death with subsequent generations being more vulnerable to sin.

After the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve begat children. Cain and Abel were the first children that Eve gave birth to. Cain later killed Abel and thereafter Seth was born when Adam was one hundred and thirty years. As time went by, two distinct groups of people had been formed; the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth. The descendants of Seth kept the statutes of God and thus they were referred to as the sons and daughters of God whereas the descendants of Cain were referred to as the sons and daughters of men due to their rampant disobedience to God's law. Since the beginning, God has always forbidden the mixing of truth and error, and the intermingling between the righteous and the unrighteous as this can ultimately lead to recession in the conception of God's word. This can be seen in the great wickedness of mankind that resulted from the

intermarriage between the sons of God and the daughters of men during the time of Noah.

The wickedness of man was so great that God decided to destroy man, all the beasts, creeping things and the fowls of the air for it repenteth him that He had made them; but Noah found Grace in God's sight. Therefore God commanded Noah to make an ark and instructed him on its measurements because the Earth was about to be destroyed by a flood.

Seven days before the flood came, Noah's family entered the ark. Of all the land animals and birds of the air, Noah was instructed to bring a male and a female after their kind in the ark to keep them alive. After they had entered the ark, the Lord shut them in. Thereafter, it rained upon the earth forty days and forty nights. Every man, all the birds, every creeping thing and all the land animals were destroyed by the flood. Only Noah and all that were with him in the ark remained alive.

After the rains had stopped and all the waters dried from the face of the Earth, Noah, his family, and the animals with him in the ark came out. Thereafter God made a covenant with Noah not to ever destroy the earth again with a flood, with the rainbow being the sign of the covenant. Noah had three sons; Shem, Ham, and Japheth and the subsequent generations arose from these sons of Noah.



Section Three

The Rise and Fall of Nimrod

PART ONE: NIMROD AND THE TOWER OF BABEL

The story of Babylon is monumental, and of great historical significance. But it, considering the circumstances of the world today, has been demoted to probably one of the most obscure and insignificant events of our ancient history. This important story is rarely mentioned in modern history books – almost intentionally forgotten.

Also, when one hears the name Nimrod, many tend to think of some clumsy oaf; one of little intelligence. In actuality, the Nimrod of old was a mighty leader, the founder of the first great empire of post-flood civilization – the kingdom of Babylon.

The flood of Noah devastated the world Noah once lived in. After the waters receded, and Noah and his family left the ark, God commanded the survivors to “spread out, and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:7). Unfortunately, the people of the day chose not to obey God. Nearly two hundred years after the flood, the descendants of Noah began to multiply in great numbers. Noah's close descendants became the patriarchs of a great number of families who, eventually, had coalesced into *nations*. This disbursement would set the stage for the eventual Babylonian Empire, and Babylonian Religion(s).

Nimrod, the son of Cush, had an impact on ancient Israel unmatched by any other of Ham's descendants. Cush, Ham's eldest son, fell under the Noahic curse. Consequently, the descendants of Cush, Nimrod included, would fall under the curse as well. Cush felt threatened by Noah's prophecy of servitude, and consequently sought to establish his own kingdom through his son. This empire would, in due course, come to represent the satanic religious systems that are presently widespread in the world. Noah's grandson Cush, was one of these early patriarchs who became a leader of many. He did not want to follow God's commandment of “spreading out,” but strove for the opposite – he wanted to bring all of the people together. He began to unite everyone into one huge nation; thus beginning the *unification* movement – all centred at the Tower of Babel.

The Bible gives us little information about Cush, Nimrod, and the Tower itself. As we read in Genesis 10:8, Cush was the father of Nimrod – and that's about all. Even though the Bible doesn't give us much more about their individual lives, we do learn from other ancient texts that Cush and Nimrod became legendary, throughout the

secular/pagan world.

The Bible does, however, tell us about the beginning of this apostasy at the Tower of Babel – the major rebellion against God, and His commandments:

“And the whole earth was of one language, and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” Genesis 11:1-4

As history reveals, the people of the post-flood era began to pursue the same ideological ideas as their ancestors did before the flood: they wanted to find ways to “make a name for themselves.” These pride-filled people wanted to exemplify *themselves*; and not God. Once again, they intentionally disobeyed the ways of God, and went out on their own. Why? How could these people become so rebellious, so *quickly*?

One reason was that many people still may have recalled stories of how their ancestors had rebelled against God (before the flood), and thought *highly* of their efforts. Many of these people began to care more about their ancestors than they did about God. They also seemed more concerned for their own livelihood than the society at large. It soon became “all about them.” And where did they get the fuel for their self-absorbed “fire?” Cush and Nimrod, of course.

The leaders of this movement wanted the people to make sure that if God ever becomes angry at them again, He would not be able to sweep them away by a flood, as He did earlier. This was a major reason for the building of this tower – pride-filled rebellion. According to a variety of ancient texts, the people of Babel, under Cush and Nimrod's command, were attempting to build a structure so high that they would never have to worry about any judgment this so-called God might have in store for them.

On top of it, they even wanted to be able to climb up this tower, all the way to heaven, and be able to destroy God with their swinging swords. Their own power, at least in their own minds, was in their *unity*. Their desires for vengeance became so strong that nothing (at least in their minds) was going to stop them – their resolve for “freedom.” It may be a little hard to understand why these people would deviate from God's righteousness so quickly; but the more we understand how they lived, and the ideological ways they quickly began to follow, the more it may begin to make sense.

As always, God had a perfect plan to thwart these rebellious ways:

"And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." Genesis 11:5-9

This is about as far as the Bible goes into it; but what happened around this time would set the stage for the establishment of one of the most influential ploys of power and control in our history.

After God confused the people's languages, nobody could really understand anyone else around them; and the construction of the tower came to a grinding halt. Cush, their former leader, was forced to give up this tower-building project, and hung his head in disgrace. The groups of families/nations once united here were now *forced* to scatter abroad, each nation according to their own languages – just as God had intended. Even though they were forced to separate, the people still wanted to retain their "unity of thought" they learned at the tower, amongst other rebellious ways.

As some of these established states form into empires, the people continued the influences and knowledge they acquired from Cush and Nimrod into their own ways of life.

Although most people gave up on finishing this Tower of Babel project, some continued on, in the same vicinity, with another endeavour: the completion of a city. No longer did they concentrate on the Tower of Babel, they now had a city, of which they were to finish; a city with a new name: Babylon.

The word "Babylon" simply means *confusion*: named after the confusion which resulted from God changing the languages of the people there. So, even though Cush had been disgraced here, he would still regain his stature – he kept his high esteem with the people, because of his once-powerful position.

Cush's son, Nimrod, also kept his esteem and stature. He would go on to take over the reigns of the establishment of the city of Babylon. Through this, Nimrod would amplify the dignity and respect of even the scattered people around him. He would take this entire tower-building rebellion of Cush one step further.

Nimrod brought the original grandeur of the tower-building project into his new political *system* of governmental rule. And, on top of it, he used theologies that he and his father had taught into forming a religious system of this same foundation.

From these systems of politics and religion, his authority and control over people was about to take hold – on a grand scale.

Semiramis, who was Cush's wife at the time of the tower, and also the mother of Nimrod, was one of the most famous women after the flood. After Cush was disgraced, the subtle Semiramis didn't want to go down with him. So, to maintain her reputation, she did the unthinkable: she married her own son. By marrying Nimrod, Semiramis could still maintain somewhat of an authority over the populous – as long as her husband remained in charge. By this time Nimrod had risen in prominence over the population and he was now their new leader.

PART TWO: NIMROD, HIS EMPIRE, RELIGION, AND HIS FALL

Of all the three sons of Noah, Ham had laid the groundwork for open rebellion against his father. He had resented Noah's authority, and in effect, God's authority. This attitude trickled down to his son Cush. Cush, in turn, raised his son in a spirit of rebellion against God and His plan for mankind.

“And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” Genesis 10:8-10

As the descendants of Ham moved into Arabia and Africa, Cush and his clan chose to settle in the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley. By the time the son of Cush had come of age, he had established himself as a “mighty one in the earth.” The Jerusalem Targum has this to say about him:

“He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, 'Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod.' Therefore it is said: 'As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.' ”

The spirit of rebellion is seen clearly in Ham's grandson as he has no desire to pursue the commandments of God.

Nimrod was without a doubt a man of great charisma and ability. He held tremendous influence over the people. It is noted that he was a “mighty hunter before the Lord.” Such a phrase would seem to indicate hunting above and beyond the normal hunting required to gather food for one family.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Behemoth and Leviathan appear sporadically

indicating that extremely large animals were present in Old Testament times. Some geologists and scholars claim that the Ice Age immediately followed the Genesis flood, and fossil records from the Ice Age, and pre-Ice Age (before the Flood), indicate that enormous animals existed, perhaps even dinosaurs, or some ancestors of them that found their way into the ark.

As the environment changed due to the flood, the food supply would have changed as well. Animals that were used to abundant supplies of food before the flood, perhaps found it hard to survive on the limited food supply after the flood.

These fossil records indicate that enormous animals were in fact living around this time. These animals may have been a serious threat to man in the centuries following the flood. Any person that gained a reputation as a Big Game Hunter in those times would surely have gained fame and popularity among men.

However, this ability was taken and used "against the Lord." Therefore, Genesis 10:9 literally translates; "He was a mighty hunter *against the Lord*: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter *against the Lord*."

Nimrod hunted and killed these animals in a heart of deliberate and open rebellion towards God. Perhaps he viewed his killings as a way to establish his control over God's creation, thus his independence from God's sovereignty. Cush had taught his son that God was against their side of the family, and it was up to him to save his lineage from enslavement and humiliation.

It was by his prowess as a hunter that fame and honour were obtained, and ultimately he rose to a position as a world leader of his time, using his charisma, ability, and energy to establish an empire, centred in Babel.

God had given Noah and his sons the order to establish a human government, but the kind He intended was a far cry from what Ham's descendants would build and establish.

The Babylon mentioned throughout the entire Bible, from the captivity and destruction of Israel in 586 B.C., to the Babylon cited in the book of Revelation, is the Babel built and established in Genesis. This was truly a government set up against God, and everything that God represented.

Nimrod built a vast network of cities and religious complexes, centred in Babel, or Babylon. The Mighty Hunter built Erech which is also called Uruk. Erech is 100 miles southeast of Babylon, and was the legendary home of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh was the hero of the Babylonian flood story. Archaeological excavations at Erech have produced ancient writings that date long before Abraham.

Immediately north of Babylon, was Accad. Accad is also found throughout the Bible

and other ancient texts spell the word as Akkad, or Agade. The Akkadian Empire lent its name from this city. The Akkadian Empire is practically the same as the Sumerian Empire.

Calneh has yet to be identified, however, it was in the land of Shinar

From Babel, he worked his way up the Tigris River into Assyria. His plan of expansion was in motion. He sought to establish great cities on each river, the Tigris and the Euphrates, in an attempt to control trade and commerce in the region.

Approximately 200 miles north of Babylon, on the upper Tigris River, he founded Nineveh. Along with Nineveh, he built the cities of Rehoboth, Resen, and Calah.

Twenty miles south of Nineveh, on the banks of the Tigris, rests the excavated ruins of Calah. Calah is still called "Nimrud" after its founder.

As he built up his vast network of cities, both on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, he began to institute religious practices that were directly at odds with the worship of the true God. Being a "mighty one" among men, and the founder of the Babylonian Empire, Nimrod was the driving force behind man's rebellion in those days.

Nimrod's religion constituted of Pantheism and Polytheism. Pantheism is the belief that nature and God are in essence the same whereas Polytheism is the religious system which established multiple gods. This was in direct opposition to Monotheism, which is the worship of one God.

There is plentiful evidence to suggest that all forms of paganism, meaning all forms of Pantheism and Polytheism, trace their roots back to Ancient Babylon.

It is no secret that the assortment of gods and goddesses from Egypt, India, Greece and Rome all find their beginnings in the original pantheon of the Babylonians. There is even evidence that Nimrod himself was later deified as Merodach, or Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. This is the origin of Pharaoh and Caesar worship seen in later empires, where the leader of a particular empire is claimed to be a god.

Naturally, the stars and planets – the "heavenly host," became involved with these deities and pagan practices. The sun began to occupy a central place of importance. The zodiac was created. Astrology became perverted, and led to spiritism, soothsaying, and the use of stars to predict the future. This perverted religion of creation-worship ultimately led to other forms of worship that seek to praise the creation, rather than the Creator.

As a result, this early Babylonian Religion began to be abhorred by pious, God-following generations of their era, and one of these pious people, decided to do something about it. This *self-appointed conspirator* killed Nimrod and cut his body into pieces. Thereafter, he alerted his co-conspirators – each one of them – to take a piece of Nimrod's body and distribute it to all the cities under his rule. They did as

they were told. But, all of this gore had a purpose: to show the world that Nimrod wasn't a god.

Nimrod's followers became very frightened. They worshipped him as a god – a god of whom they thought would live forever. Now, he was dead, and the validity of their newfound religion was in question. It just happened that, right around this time, Semiramis, Nimrod's wife, was pregnant; the father supposedly unknown. Yet, this was her golden opportunity to capitalize on those looking for answers.

According to her, Nimrod reincarnated himself as the sun god and thereafter inseminated his rays in her womb for her to conceive. This formed the basis of Mother and Child worship which was instigated by the Babylonians.



Section Four

Nimrod's Grand Pantheon

Nimrod's Grand Pantheon is the origin of all false religions. This system of worship has its origin in the legend of Nimrod and his wife Semiramis. Nimrod (the great grandson of Noah) rebelled against God, like his father Cush. Eventually Nimrod was put to death for his evil deeds, and according to the ancient patriarchal system, parts of his body were sent to various cities as a warning.

His wife Semiramis fled, but spread the rumour that he had ascended to heaven, where he had become one with the sun. When Semiramis later gave birth to a son, she claimed that it was the reincarnation of her deified husband, and that he had returned to save the human race.

She was later deified as the mother of the sun god, and it was supposed she had ascended to heaven as the queen of heaven. In the various cultures throughout history and around the world, the same basic deities have been worshipped under different names. Often shown as a mother with a child in her arms in statues, this was Semiramis carrying her child whom she named Tammuz. This was adopted by various ancient civilizations.

In Egypt, the mother and the child were worshipped as Isis and Osiris or Horus, in India as Isi and Iswara or Devaki and Krishna, in China and Japan as the mother goddess Shing Moo with child, in Greece as Ceres or Irene and Plutus, in Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter-puer, or Venus and Adonis, and in Scandinavia as Frigga and Balder. The mother and child were worshipped in Babylon as Ishtar and Tammuz, and in Phoenicia, as Ashtoreth and Baal. Moreover, the child was worshipped as both husband and son of the mother goddess. Today, we can see this pagan Babylonian statue under the guise of Mary holding Jesus in her arms in many Catholic churches. The male component is a counterfeit of Jesus Christ. The Biblical names used for Jesus were also used for the child in ancient religions of the pagan civilizations. The Persian Zoroaster was referred to as the *seed*, Mithra the Persian sun god was referred to as the Saviour, the Greek Dionysus as the *sin-bearer*, the Roman Bacchus as the *branch*, the Indian Vishnu as the *victim-man*, and the Egyptian Osiris as the *king of kings*.

At this time in history, the worship of God's creation or nature enshrouded the true worship of the Creator. The sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies began to be regarded as gods. The most revered ones being the sun and the moon.

Sun worship at this time was well known and widespread. The Egyptians had their sun god called Ra, Mithra was the sun god of the Persians, among the Celts, we have Belenos as the sun god, and among the Hindus we have Surya as the sun god.

Moon worship, an aspect of the Chaldean religion founded by Nimrod, spread and was also regarded to be a form of worship across many world regions. Lunar deities were now seen almost everywhere across the world.

In the legends of the Inuit people, Alignak is the god of both the moon and weather, Selene, Hecate and Artemis are the Greek lunar goddesses, among the Celts we have Cerridwen as the lunar deity, the Chinese have Chang'e, the Aztecs have Coyolxauhqui, the Romans have Diana, Polynesians have Sina, and the Egyptians have Thoth.

Pagan practices such as the use of magic emerged. Soothsaying, astrology and the use of the zodiac together with the use of prayer beads are among the pagan practices that emerged.

Astrology, as it is practiced in the West today, dates back to ancient Babylon, where priests used the movement of the heavenly bodies to interpret the wishes of the gods. The Babylonians believed that the heavenly bodies that occupy the firmament were divine entities. The Greeks adopted and adapted astrology from the Babylonians, and among other things gave the constellations many of the names people use today on the Zodiac signs, all of which are based on the Greek gods. These names include Aries (from Ares, the Greek god of war), Taurus (from Cerus the Bull – Greek mythology), Gemini (from Castor and Pollux – Greek mythology), Cancer (from Crios, guardian of the sea nymphs – Greek mythology), Leo (from the Nemean Lion of Hercules – Greek mythology), Virgo (from Persephone, Greek goddess of the Harvest and the Underworld), Libra (from Astraea, the Greek goddess of justice), Scorpio (from the giant scorpion that slayed Orion – Greek mythology), Sagittarius (from Crotus, the Musical Satyr – Greek mythology), Capricorn (from Pricus the Sea Goat – Greek mythology), Aquarius (from Ganymede, the consort of Zeus – Greek mythology), and Pisces (from Aphrodite's fish guides – Greek mythology).

Connected with sun worship and moon worship, was the use of prayer beads used to glorify these deified heavenly bodies. Prayer beads were used among the Babylonians and adopted by other communities such as the Egyptians and the Celts. Today we can see the same practice adapted from the Babylonians used among the Muslims and the Catholics (the rosary beads).

Thus the pedestal of Nimrod's Grand pantheon was in Babylon, and from that point all pagan religious practices spread across the world.

These ancient Babylonian belief systems – knowledge and ways of life to be ingrained into forthcoming cultures, politics and religious beliefs – would have to be carefully and subtly *moulded* and *assimilated* into each new empire succeeding Babylon. To the pagans, God was still their enemy. His ways were not their ways. Their own thought became the measure of all things, not God. The two avenues of belief have been at odds with each other, ever since the beginning.





CHAPTER TWO

From Babylon to Rome

Section One

Historical Background

From the time of Nimrod, a series of events unfolded leading to the rise and fall of empires in various civilizations, but all were united under one religious authority shrouded in mysterious darkness without their consent. This was the power of the evil one and his troops.

But amidst all this confusion God chose Abraham, and out of him, the Israelite nation arose, and these were God's chosen people under the direct rule of God's commandments. The deceiver therefore strove to work among the children of Israel to bring discord among them as evidently seen during the time of the kings of Israel and Judah. During this period God used prophets to forewarn his people of the judgements that were to befall them if they would not pay heed to His divine law.

Before the Babylonian captivity, in the year 760 BC, Assyria was driving for world domination. The capital city, Nineveh. The Assyrians were among the most feared and hated people of ancient times. Because of their wicked deeds, this nation's time was quickly drawing to an end.

As always, God wanted to give a warning before destruction. So God sent Jonah to Nineveh. You can probably imagine why Jonah did not want to go considering it was the metropolis of the world, it was crushing nations around it, and Jonah's own country was on their hit list. But after his uncomfortable Mediterranean detour, Jonah did go to Nineveh. The warning was heeded to from king to peasant and all repented. Therefore, God turned away from the judgment that was to come upon Assyria. This warning was lost sight of, and by 745 BC, Tiglath-pileser the third ascended the throne. He took Assyria to new heights. The pages of history tell us ...

Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria, (745–727 BC) inaugurated the last and greatest phase of Assyrian expansion. He subjected Syria and Palestine to his rule, and later he merged the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia.

(<https://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/595535/Tiglath-pileser-III>)

It was during the reign of Tiglath-pileser the third that Isaiah began his ministry. God used Isaiah to give a warning to his people of the impending Assyrian invasion.

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give

him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Isaiah 10:5-6

During Isaiah's ministry, the kingdom of Israel was already divided into two parts. The northern kingdom, Israel, was comprised of 10 tribes, and its capital was Samaria. The southern kingdom, Judah, was comprised of two tribes and its capital was Jerusalem. The ministry of Isaiah was conducted in the southern kingdom of Judah.

The northern kingdom Israel had rejected warning after warning given by Elijah, Elisha and Amos. Around 750 BC, Hosea sounded the final call. Hosea testified of the spiritual adultery taking place in Israel. Israel was trying to serve two masters, a bit of God and a bit of Baal. It's like a bit of Christ and a bit of the world, a bit of hot and a bit of cold. Israel became lukewarm. Hosea's message was unheeded. Now, Israel was without a prophet. As the Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. 2 Kings 17:22-23

These words of Scripture were fulfilled over a ten-year period. In 732 BC, Tiglath-pileser took control of the northern portion of Israel. By 722 BC, King Shalmaneser came to complete the job. But Shalmaneser died while besieging the rebellious city of Samaria. And in the same year, his brother Sargon took control and completed the conquest and scattered Israel while Judah remained.

Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Isaiah 37:33-35

Wherever there's great success, there is pride and arrogance. In 705 BC, Sennacherib ascended the throne of Assyria. In his conquests, he came to the city of Jerusalem. He stood outside the city wall and mocked the people saying the Egyptian's god couldn't help them, the Mede's god couldn't help them, and all the nations' gods couldn't help them. Then Sennacherib boastfully said, "Neither can your God help you." But God had a big lesson to teach Sennacherib, and this lesson is recorded in Isaiah chapter 37.

Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and

went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. Isaiah 37:36-37

185,000 troops dead. Understandably, Sennacherib went straight home to Nineveh and stayed there. From then on, history tells us that Sennacherib engaged more in architectural work than in global conquests. But God had another warning to give to Assyria. This is recorded in Isaiah 10:12.

Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. Isaiah 10:12

God always gives time for people to repent. So time went on in the Assyrian Empire. By 699 BC, Ashurbanipal, the last great king, ascended the throne of Assyria. By 640 BC, God chose Nahum to be His profit. Before the Assyrian Empire started declining, God sent Nahum to give a very clear warning to Nineveh of its destruction as Jonah did over a hundred years before, because God wanted Assyria to have an expected end.

"Behold, I am against thee," saith the Lord of hosts, "and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, 'Nineveh is laid waste. Who will bemoan her? Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?'" Nahum 3:5-7

Ashurbanipal rejected the warnings given by Nahum, the prophet. And by 627 BC, he died. Assyria then fell into civil war. By 620 BC, a man from the tribe of the Chaldees named Nabopolassar gained control of Babylon. In 612 BC, he sent his armies from Babylon to Nineveh. The general of the Army was Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar completely annihilated Nineveh. By 605 BC, he ascended the throne as sole ruler when his father Nabopolassar died. Now, God raises Daniel to give a warning to Nebuchadnezzar.

After Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC, the Assyrian kingdom was divided into three main powers. Media controlled the north and northeast. Babylon controlled Elam and the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Egypt controlled everything west of the Euphrates and North Africa. It was within this division that Egypt controlled that this city Jerusalem found herself paying homage to Egypt. The kingdom of Judah became a vassal under the king of Egypt. This city trusted in Egypt for security instead of trusting to the most high that ruleth in the kingdoms of men.

The divine record shows us this in 2 Kings 23.

And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his

father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there. And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaohnechoh. 2 Kings 23:34-35

The growing power and ambition of Babylon soon led to a clash with Egypt. The Babylonian crowned prince Nebuchadnezzar was taking control from his aging father. In 607 BC, Nebuchadnezzar embarks on a military campaign. This campaign took them, among other places, to Carchemish. It was there that the armies of Egypt and Babylon met during 605 BC, which was the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign over Judah. In this battle at Carchemish, Pharaoh Necho and Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled the words of God in Jeremiah chapter 46.

The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah. The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt. Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee. The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him: And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 46:1,2,13,14,25,26

Egypt and their allies were overcome and put to flight in a single battle. Nebuchadnezzar strip Pharaoh of his conquests and drove him back into Egypt. The completeness of this victory is recorded in 2 Kings chapter 24.

And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt. 2 Kings 24:7

History tells us that after this victory, Nebuchadnezzar's father died on the 16th of August 605 BC. Within three weeks, Nebuchadnezzar was back into Babylon and ascended the throne as sole ruler, although he was already joint ruler in 607 BC, two years before. It was during this military campaign that Nebuchadnezzar came to this city, Jerusalem, and besieged it. It was the third year of Jehoiakim's reign over Jerusalem. This was the accomplishment of the first words of the book of Daniel.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king

of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. Daniel 1:1-2

It would've been a hard thing to have lived here and witnessed the terrors of battle, seeing your beloved city and the Temple destroyed, the treasures taken, and worst of all, the young, talented children of the royal house taken captive. But God had given Jerusalem a very clear warning of what to expect. He warned them through his prophet Isaiah 107 years beforehand. This is found in 2 Kings chapter 20.

And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. 2 Kings 20:16-18

The Hebrews were taken captive into Babylon in 606 BC. This marks the beginning of the 70-year prophecy spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet. As Daniel and his three friends went into Babylon, they went via Haran. And thus, they retraced the steps that Abraham originally made when he was called out of the land of the Chaldees. These young men would've been greatly discouraged as they went into Babylon. But you can imagine how much comfort they received by the words recorded here in Jeremiah.

For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive. Jeremiah 29:10-14

Daniel and his three friends sought the Lord during this catastrophic event, and they found God to be a personal comfort and guide.

Babylon city was the hub of the ancient world. Never before or after has there been a city like this. The Bible calls it the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency. On entering this city, Daniel and his companions were immediately placed in the Babylonian education system. In 603 BC, their third-year, they completed their education, and in the same year, entered the service of the king. Nebuchadnezzar was in his second year reign as sole ruler which was his fourth year reign, according

to Jewish chronology, commencing when he was joint ruler with his father.

Events occurred that severely tested the integrity of these youthful Hebrews, and proved to an idolatrous nation the power and faithfulness of God.

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. Daniel 2:1

This remarkable dream made a deep impression upon the mind of Nebuchadnezzar, but he found it impossible to recall the particulars. History tells us why this was such a problem for the king.

In Mesopotamia, the king was viewed as the cultic mediator between God and man. As head of all the priests of the country, he had important cultic functions at the new year's festival. The king may be the recipient of a direct revelation of the will of a god.

In Mesopotamia, the duty of the king to ascertain the will of the gods was more strongly emphasized. A directive of the gods could result from omens, dreams or reading the entrails of offerings. All major undertakings of the king were dependent on directives of the god who was to be consulted in advance. (sacred kingship, (2012), In Encyclopaedia Britannica, Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/515559/sacred-kingship>)

So forgetting the dream was like forgetting a direct revelation from God about future events, and that's exactly what it was.

Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. Daniel 2:2

The king called for all the spiritualistic groups in Babylon, but not for Daniel and his friends. Why? Because they did not belong to such classes of people. The king offered great rewards for revealing the dream or a gruesome death for failing to fulfill his demands. The king did not get his request.

For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. Daniel 2:12-13

After this decree, Daniel secured extra time from the king. The sacred record tells us that he returned home, informed his companions, and they sought the Lord to unveil the dream to them.

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and

ever: for wisdom and might are His. Daniel 2:19-20

One thing that Daniel realized in this dream that we also need to realize is that God is the ruling power in the affairs of this world. He sets up kings and removes kings to fulfill his own purpose. Daniel had utmost confidence in what God had shown him. He didn't go to the king asking, "Is this your dream?" Instead, he gave God thanks for showing him the king's matter.

Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. Daniel 2:25

Daniel declares plainly to King Nebuchadnezzar that the source of all wisdom, knowledge and understanding of future events doesn't come from him but comes from the God of heaven, and that the purpose of God in giving him this dream was to reveal what shall be in the latter days. Daniel then related the dream.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Daniel 2:31-35

As Daniel related the facts, the dream came fresh to the king's mind. Nebuchadnezzar was an idolater. Therefore, this image was an object which had once commanded his attention and respect. This image is a comprehensive outline of world history. The glorious kingdom of Babylon formed the head of gold all following kingdoms decreased in splendor but increased in strength as shown by the grades of metal. First gold, then silver, brass, and iron.

In the latter part of the world's history, a marked change was revealed in the iron mixed with clay, and the stone that destroyed these kingdoms and filled the whole earth with its own. Let us walk through history as we enlarge this interpretation.

This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. Daniel 2:36-38

Nebuchadnezzar reigned over Babylon for 43 years, from 605 BC to 562 BC. It was during this time that his kingdom rose to the nation that was represented by the golden head. Babylon was the recognized center of cultic religion, wealth and education. Thus it was that all kingdoms and people were under the shadow of her influence and power.

Gold flowed into Babylon from all provinces of its empire. The immense treasures gathered by King Solomon in Jerusalem were all taken by Nebuchadnezzar, giving to his kingdom a tremendous amount of gold. The Greek historian Herodotus visited the city about 454 BC and testified to the glory and splendor of this city.

It was the golden kingdom of a golden age. Babylon, its metropolis, towered to a height never reached by any of its successors. Situated in the garden of the east, laid out in a perfect square 60 miles in circumference, 15 miles on each side, surrounded by a wall 350 feet high and 87 feet thick, with a moat around it of equal cubic capacity, laid out in luxuriant pleasure grounds and gardens, interspersed with magnificent dwellings; this city, with its 60 miles of moat, its 60 miles of outer wall, its 30 miles of river wall through its center, its hanging gardens, rising terrace above terrace, its 150 gates of solid brass, its temple of Belus three miles in circumference, its perfect arrangement for convenience, ornament and defense, with unlimited resources, this city was itself a wonder of the world. Never before saw the earth a city like this. Never since has it seen its equal. And there, with nations prostrate at her feet, Babylon was a true queen in peerless grandeur. – HERODOTUS

The historian Gibbon records that the cities of the Babylonian Empire were plundered for almost 1,000 years and still there was gold to be found. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BC, he was followed by a succession of Kings, which ended with Belshazzar and his father, who were overthrown by the Medes and Persians in 539 BC, fulfilling these words.

And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee.... Daniel 2:39

As silver is of less value than gold, so the Medo-Persian Empire was inferior in splendor, luxury and magnificence to the kingdom of Babylon, but not in strength. To understand the Medo-Persian Empire, we need some background knowledge on its rulers. The Scriptures name two individuals who were involved in the overthrow of Babylon. The first one is recorded in Daniel chapter five.

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. Daniel 5:30-31

The other individual is recorded in Isaiah chapter 45.

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to

subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. Isaiah 45:1

Darius was a Mede, and Cyrus was a Persian. The two arms of the image represented the alliance between Media and Persia. Cyrus was the son of Cambyses, king of Persia. His mother, Mandane, was the daughter of the Median king Astyges. When Astyges died, his son, Cyaxaseres II, also known as Darius the Mede, took rulership over Media. However, Cyrus held sway over Media and Persia but was not sole ruler.

After Cyrus had taken Babylon, history informs us that he gave authority to his aged uncle, Darius the Mede.

The historian Prideaux says, "Darius the Mede, that is Cyaxaseres, the uncle of Cyrus, took the kingdom, for Cyrus allowed him the title of all his conquests as long as he lived." – HUMPHREY PRIDEAUX, The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews.

Although Darius was in his later years, he only ruled by permission of the real conqueror, Cyrus.

*And now when the march had brought them into Media, Cyrus turned aside to visit Cyaxaseres [Darius]. After they had met and embraced, Cyrus began by telling Cyaxaseres that a palace in Babylon and an estate had been set aside for him...
Cyropaedia by Xenophon*

Cyrus the Great led the Medo-Persian army against the city of Babylon in 539 BC. He was guided by the Lord to fulfill divine prophecy that was written over a hundred years before he was born.

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. Isaiah 45:1-3

Not only does God tell of Cyrus's name before he was born, but he also ordained the method of conquering the great city Babylon. Cyrus diverted the River Euphrates enabling him to march under the wall and through the gate that was left open.

However, by this time, the trenches were dug, and Cyrus heard that it was a time of high festival in Babylon when the citizens drink and make merry the whole night long.

As soon as the darkness fell, he set his men to work. The mouths of the trenches were opened, and during the night, the water poured in, so that the river-bed formed a highway into the heart of Babylon. When the great stream had taken to its new channel, Cyrus ordered his Persian officers to bring up their thousands, horse and foot alike,..... the allies to follow in their old order. They lined up immediately, and Cyrus made his own bodyguard descend into the dry channel first to see if the bottom was firm enough for marching. – Cyropaedia by Xenophon.

After Darius had put Daniel in the lion's den, he died in 536 BC leaving Cyrus, sole ruler over the Empire. Cyrus was a believer in religious liberty. And in the same year, 536, he made his famous decree, allowing the Jews to return home to Jerusalem, undoing what Nebuchadnezzar had done in 606 BC when he first besieged Jerusalem and took the Jews captive into Babylon, thus completing the prophecy spoken by Jeremiah.

For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. Jeremiah 29:10

After the death of Cyrus, his son Cambyses II ruled for seven years, from 530 to 523 BC. In 522, his younger brother, Smerdis, held the scepter for seven months. Then in 521 BC, Darius the Persian, also known as Darius the Great, ascended the throne. It was under his rulership that the empire answered most fully to the silver of the great image. He also expanded the empire to its height.

Darius conducted the introduction of a universal currency, the daric. Darius supplied the coinage system as a transnational currency to regulate trade and commerce throughout his empire. Early in his reign, Darius wanted to organize the loosely organized empire with a system of taxation. To do this, Darius created 20 provinces and specified fixed tributes that the people were required to pay in daric. There were two types of daric, a gold and a silver. Only the king could mint gold darics. Important generals and satraps minted silver darics, thus making the silver daric the most prevalent by far.

The daric was a major boost to international trade. Trade goods such as textiles, carpets, tools and metal objects began to travel throughout Asia, Europe and Africa. To further improve trade, Darius built a royal highway, a postal system and Phoenician-based commercial shipping. During Darius's Greek expedition, he had begun construction projects in Susa, Egypt and Persepolis. He had linked the Red Sea to the river Nile by building a canal, which ran from modern Zagazig to modern Suez in 497 BCE. Darius also built a canal to connect the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

Thus silver poured into Persepolis, the capital of the empire. This silver-rich kingdom

became a true pioneer in global economy. It was this king Darius that gave the second decree to rebuild Jerusalem. After his death, Xerxes, the husband of Queen Esther, became extremely wealthy as a result of this inherited economy. Xerxes was succeeded by Artaxerxes who gave the third decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in 457 BC.

After his death, Medo-Persia continued for another 93 years, ending with Darius III who lost the kingdom to Alexander the Great in 331 BC.

Xerxes, the husband of Queen Esther in 480 BC during the battle of Salamina, brought to ruins an ancient citadel known as the Acropolis. During the time of the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greeks were not a united people. Greek territory was made up of many city states, each having their own king or government. Fighting among these states was common. Athens and Sparta had become notorious for such battles. Within the northern state of Macedon, a man named Philip ascended the throne in 359 BC.

King Philip II of Macedon united the greater part of Greece through diplomacy and warfare. In 337 BC, he created the League of Corinth. Many of the city states became members of this league. In 336 BC, he died, leaving a united Greece to his successor and son, Alexander. With this united front, the young King Alexander was now in a position to lead the Greeks to the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

.....and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. Daniel 2:39

Brass was used by God to represent the Greek empire, although the brass of the Bible is referring to a copper alloy known today as bronze. Thus, we have the three classical metals, gold, silver and bronze.

The Greeks were experts at smelting bronze. The soldiers wore breastplates of bronze, helmets of bronze, carried shields of bronze, and used swords made from bronze. (shm.com.au/tv/military/alexander-the-great-2756964.html)

The success of the Greek and Macedonian army was largely found in their leader Alexander. At age 13, Alexander was schooled by Aristotle. At age 16, he was a warrior in the army. At age 18, he was general. At age 20, he was proclaimed king. At age 26, he had conquered the Persian Empire and was named Lord of Asia.

Throughout all his life, he never lost a battle. Then, on the 10th of June, 323 BC, Alexander died in Babylon. When Alexander the Great died, he left behind a huge empire. Alexander's empire stretched from his homeland of Macedon through the Greek city states that his father had subdued, to Bactria, and parts of India in the East. It included Anatolia, the Levant, Egypt, Babylonia and Persia.

Without a chosen heir, there was an immediate dispute among his generals as to who should be his successor. This was the beginning of the Hellenistic period of Greek history. Greek territory was ruled by several Greek dynasties for over 160 years until the iron power of Rome was felled. Hellenization denotes the spread of Greek language, culture and population into the former Persian Empire after the death of Alexander.

Greece was now the world dominating power, but she was altogether different from the preceding two. Instead of gaining control through the power of government or religion, the Greeks gained control of the world through the power of intellect, through education, arts, exploration, literature, theater, architecture, music, mathematics, philosophy, science and Olympic sports. But in 168 BC, the Roman army defeated the Macedonian and Greek allies in the battle of Pydna. Greece then was incorporated into the Roman Empire.

So far, God has used metals to represent three kingdoms with perfect accuracy. We will now see why God chose iron to represent the fourth.

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. Daniel 2:40

This is undoubtedly the empire of Rome. The secular historian, Edward Gibbon, makes this remarkable statement regarding her iron power.

The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean, and the images of gold or silver or brass that might serve to represent the nations and their kings was successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome. (Edward Gibbon, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, vol. III, generational observations following Chapter 38, page 634)

Rome was the largest and longest lasting of all preceding kingdoms. The iron in the image shows us that Rome will last until the end of Earth's history. However, there are two phases of iron. One is iron alone. The other is mixed with miry clay. This is fulfilled in the pagan Roman Empire, and the papal Roman Empire. The political philosopher Thomas Hobbes makes this interesting observation in the 1600s regarding papal Rome.

And if a man considers the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the papacy is none other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof. For so did the papacy start up on a sudden out of the ruins of that heathen power. (Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan:463)

Throughout Roman history, Rome has had seven different heads of government. The first were kings ruling the kingdom. Next, Rome became a republic and were headed by consuls, which are two elected individuals holding office at the same time. Each console had veto power over his colleague. The third was called a Decemvri, which is a Latin term meaning 10 men. These elected 10 men held the Roman administration from 451 BC to 449.

Another head was called the triumvirate, which is simply a coalition of three men in administration. Yet another set of rulers Rome had were dictators. Dictators were dispersed throughout the history of the Roman Republic. The most famous of these would be Julius Caesar, who was declared perpetual dictator in 45 BC. The sixth head of government, emperors. Emperors differ from kings because an emperor is a king of kings. For example, King Herod was subservient to the Emperor of Rome. Also an emperor rules an empire as opposed to a kingdom.

After the Germanic tribes dominated Rome, Rome was finally ruled by popes. Still today, the seat of the papal Roman Empire is located in the city of Rome. Rome began as a kingdom in around 753 BC. The first king was Romulus who founded the city and named it after himself. The last King was a king named Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. He was proud, tyrannical and lost favor in the eyes of the people. It was said that Lucius was a source of the phrase, the tall poppy syndrome.

According to Livy, Tarquin cut off the heads of the tallest poppies in his garden as an allegory to instruct his son, Sextus, to pacify a recently-conquered enemy city by executing its leading citizens. This is one of the many stories which leads to the modern expression of "Tall Poppy Syndrome" to describe the phenomenon of tearing down individuals who rise too far above the majority.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucius_Tarquinius_Superbus)

After Sextus violated a Roman noblewoman, the Tarquin family removed from power and driven out by Roman aristocrats in 509 BC. At this time, the Roman Republic was formed. It was under the republic that Rome came to be as strong as iron.

Rome's expansion of territory commenced with the domination of the Italian peninsula. Rome then turned her eyes across the Mediterranean, and fought three wars against their North African rival Carthage. These were known as the Punic wars. It was during the second Punic war that King Philip V of Macedon made an alliance with Carthage's general, Hannibal. This annoyed Rome, so Rome then took on these two powerful kingdoms at the same time, Carthage in the west and Macedon in the east. Rome first went to war with the Greek kingdom of Macedon in 214 BC and again in 200 BC. Rome then gained a decisive victory against the Greeks at Pydna in 168 BC, reducing Macedonia to a Roman province.

By this time, Rome dominated much of the Greek territory. Although winning the wars

against Carthage and the Greeks, Rome was financially and emotionally drained due to the loss of thousands of soldiers in bloody battles. So then how could Rome be as strong as iron if it was in this weak state? Well, one thing was clear, that an unprofessional citizen army was no longer adequate for an empire the size of Rome. Gaius Marius, a statesman and general of the Roman Republic, initiated a group of military reforms which profoundly shaped the future of the Roman power.

Up until this time, the Roman army was made up of the wealthier, landowning citizens of Rome. It was a seasonal army, so it was formed only when the need arose. Each soldier had to provide their own equipment. This all became a dutiful exercise to defend their land and increase the borders of the Roman Empire.

But the policies of Marius, which greatly improved the military, hinged upon the selfishness of the human heart. Here are some of the reforms.

In 30 BC, the Imperial Roman army was established. All Roman citizens who joined the army, including the poor, were paid well for their service. Thus, it became a career. For the first time, the Roman state provided equipment to all giving uniformity to their force. Each soldier was equipped with a short iron sword called a gladius, a sphere called a pilum, iron chest armor, and a long rectangular shield. The soldiers were offered inducements and bonuses through spoils gained in conquering new territory. Retirement benefits in the form of land grants were also provided. This was very enticing for the landless poor citizens of Rome. They were required to enlist with some 20 years of full military service, but many served as long as 30 to 40 years, thus giving Rome a standing professional army. (Compiled from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Roman_army)

Can you see how these policies played on human greed? For many of the soldiers, it was all about personal gain. Look at what the prophet John the Baptist had to say to these Roman soldiers.

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. Luke 3:14

The Roman generals had an iron grip on their soldiers, not only through the pleasure of personal gain, but through the use of extreme discipline. Here's an example.

Decimation was a form of military discipline used by senior commanders in the Roman army to punish mutinous or cowardly soldiers. The word decimation is derived from Latin, meaning removal of a tenth. A cohort selected for punishment by decimation was divided into groups of 10. Each group drew lots, Sortition, and the soldier on whom the lot fell was executed by his nine comrades, often by stoning or clubbing. The remaining soldiers were often given rations of barley instead of wheat.

[[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decimation_\(Roman_army\)\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decimation_(Roman_army)))]

When you compare these methods with dutiful service to a kingless state like other kingdoms, you get a glimpse at the secret behind the strength of Rome. As a result of the military reforms made by Marius, the Roman generals who were often political leaders became too powerful within the Roman Republic. This caused the downfall of the Republic and the beginning of the emperors.

The first Emperor was Gaius Octavius, also known as Caesar Augustus. He became emperor in 27 BC. Augustus was the Emperor when Jesus Christ was born. His successor, Tiberius Caesar, was Emperor during Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Augustus also played on the base nature of man through pleasure and fear, in order to have an iron control not only over the military, but also over the populace of the Roman Empire.

At this point in Roman history, unemployment was high. Large agricultural estates were supported by government grants. These estates exploited slave labor from conquered lands. Small farms couldn't compete and gradually went out of business. This caused an influx of the unemployed into the cities. Augustus maintained control of these idle citizens through the pleasure and fear principle.

The Emperor Augustus was well aware of this risk, and was keen to keep the poorest plebeians happy enough and reasonably well fed so that they would not riot. He began the system of state bribery, that the writer Juvenal described as bread and circuses. Free grain and controlled food prices meant that plebeians could not starve, while free entertainment such as chariot races and gladiators in amphitheaters and the Circus Maximus – meant that they would not get bored and restless. Bribery, it may have been, but it often worked.

Bread and circuses gave the people an addiction to the Western lifestyle that Rome promoted. Rome built many entertainment centers in order to keep the masses amused.

About 230 Roman amphitheaters have been found across the area of the Roman Empire. They were used for events such as gladiator combats, chariot races, animal slayings and executions. Amphitheaters are distinguished from circuses and from hippodromes, which were usually rectangular and built mainly for racing events, and from stadia built for athletics. Imperial amphitheaters comfortably accommodated 40,000 to 60,000 spectators, or up to 100,000 in the largest venues, and were only outdone by the hippodromes in seating capacity.

Rome also employed capital punishment as a penalty for disobedience or rebellion. The apostle Paul was charged before the Roman government for being a ringleader of a worldwide uprising.

For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Acts 24:5

Consequently, Paul was brought before Nero in Rome and was beheaded for his Christian faith. Nero marks the beginning of the Christian persecution.

These persecutions beginning under Nero, about the time of the martyrdom of Paul, continued with greater or less fury for centuries. Christians were falsely accused of the most dreadful crimes, and declared to be the cause of great calamities. As they became the objects of popular hatred and suspicion, informers stood ready for the sake of gain to betray the innocent. They were condemned as rebels against the empire as foes of religion and pests to society. Great numbers were thrown to wild beasts or burned alive in the amphitheater. Some were crucified. Others were covered with the skins of wild animals and thrust into the arena to be torn by dogs.

Their punishment was often made the chief entertainment at public fetes. Vast multitudes assembled to enjoy the site and greeted their dying agonies with laughter and applause. (The Great Controversy, pg. 40, par. 1)

This policy of offering a combination of rewards and punishment to induce behavior was a strength of Rome's iron power over the military and the masses. After Nero's death, another dynasty of Roman emperors arose, including Vespasian and his son Titus who destroyed the city of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Rome then continued for another 235 years, until the reign of Constantine, which saw the empire divide, the capital city relocate, and a new state religion introduced. From Constantine onward, the Roman Empire was never the same again. Foreign elements were introduced, and the iron began to be mixed with miry clay

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. Daniel 2:41

This prophecy of the division of the Roman Empire began its fulfillment during the third century AD. The Roman army was struggling to maintain the large borders of its empire. Due to internal and external pressures, Rome lost control of a significant portion of its Eastern territory to the powerful trading city of Palmyra.

By 271 AD, the Palmyran Empire controlled a large portion of Asia Minor, spreading all the way down to Egypt. At the same time, the western frontier fell to a mutinous Roman army which established their kingdom known as the Gallic Empire, which held sway over Gaul, Spain, and Britain. In 270 AD during the height of this crisis, Emperor Aurelian emerged. After protecting the northern frontier against barbarian invaders, Aurelian restored Roman power in the east by conquering Palmyra in a series of battles in 272 AD.

In the following year, Aurelian marched to Gaul to reclaim its Western territory. In 274 AD, he defeated the Gallic Empire ending the Roman crisis. However, Rome's instability continued. In 285 AD, Diocletian endeavored to restore Rome's former strength and stability by dividing the power of government between four emperors, two senior emperors, and two junior emperors.

Diocletian, as senior emperor, ruled the east from Nicomedia, while Maximien, also a senior emperor, ruled the west from Milan. Galerius, a junior emperor controlled Illyricum from Thessalonika. And Constantius, also a junior emperor, had power over Gaul and Britain from Trier. However, naming numerous emperors led only to more civil wars, making it easier for the barbaric tribes to invade. In 305 AD, Diocletian retired. And over the next two years, eight emperors began to fight for supremacy, bringing Rome near total collapse.

However, Rome could not collapse at this point if the prophecy of the iron and clay was to be fulfilled. Important changes needed to take place before Rome could be divided. Divine providence solved this crisis.

After Diocletian retired, Maximien followed suit. The two former junior emperors, Galerius and Constantius became senior emperors in the East and West respectively. Severus was junior emperor to Constantius in the West and Maximinus II was junior emperor to Galerius in the East. The following year, 306 AD, Constantius died in Britain, and his son, Constantine, was then proclaimed emperor by his father's army. However, this conflicted with Severus's new position as senior emperor in Rome. This news provoked Maxentius, son of Maximien, to proclaim himself as emperor in Rome also. Maxentius then called on his father to leave retirement to be co-emperor with him, and this he did. Maxentius and his father killed Severus to secure their position.

Galerius, the Eastern Emperor, came to the West intending to dethrone Maximien. Galerius then appointed Licinius as emperor in the East, giving Rome six emperors once again. Constantine then captured Maximien, who afterward hanged himself. A number of months later, Galerius died, leaving the Roman Empire with four emperors. Maxentius and Maximinus II made an alliance motivating Licinius to ally with Constantine.

Soon after, Constantine destroyed Maxentius by defeating him and his army in 312 AD. Months later, Licinius defeated Maximinus and his army, which led Maximinus to commit suicide, leaving only two emperors in power. Constantine then went to war against Licinius, finally executing him, and becoming sole ruler over the entire Roman Empire.

"The eastern regions were united with those of the west, and the whole body of the Roman Empire was graced by a single and supreme ruler." (EUSEBIUS)

Constantine the Great was Rome's last emperor to rule the entire empire. This was necessary to fulfill Biblical prophecy. Constantine made some very important changes that were like seeds to spring up in a Roman government of a different kind. During his 31 years of rulership, Constantine publicly professed Christianity, became the first Christian emperor, and put a stop to Christian persecution through the Edict of Milan in 313 AD

When you see that this has been granted to [Christians] by us, your worship will know that we have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made that we may not seem to detract from any dignity of any religion. ("Edict of Milan," Lactantius, On the Deaths of the Persecutors [De Mortibus Persecutorum], ch. 48. opera, ed, O, Fritzsche, II, p 288 sq. [Bibl Patr. Ecc. Lat. XI].)

Constantine also greatly favored the church in Rome and flattered the bishops, donating land and wealth to the church.

It was the aim of Constantine to make theology a branch of politics. It was the hope of every bishop in the empire to make politics a branch of theology. (Draper. Intellectual Development of Europe, Par.6)

Constantine made theology a branch of politics by acting as supreme judge to solve doctrinal divisions within the church, even though he wasn't baptized. He dealt with the Donatus schism in North Africa by 320 AD. He also called and presided over the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD attempting to solve the Godhead schism between arianism and trinitarianism. In 321 AD, Constantine issued his famous Sunday Edict.

Constantine, Emperor Augustus, to Helpidius on the venerable day of the sun, let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits, because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-sewing or vine-planting, lest, by neglecting the proper moment for such operations, the bounty of heaven should be lost. (History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, Sec LXXV, Par. 5)

Constantine also shifted the political capital from Rome to Byzantium, which he renamed Constantinople. This gave the Bishop of Rome more freedom to exercise civil authority within the city of Rome. So it was that Constantine opened the door of the state to the clergy.

To the reign of Constantine the Great must be referred the commencement of those dark and dismal times which oppressed Europe for a thousand years..... An

ambitious man had attained to imperial power by impersonating the interests of a rapidly growing party. The unavoidable consequences were a union between the church and the state, a diverting of the dangerous classes from civil to ecclesiastical paths, and the decay and materialization of religion. (Draper. Intellectual Development of Europe, page 453, Par.24)

This joining of church and state was an irresistible temptation to the bishops of Rome. The bishops believed that pagan Rome was the oppressor of the Christians as Egypt was the oppressor of the Israelites, and that Constantine was to the Christians as Moses was to the children of Israel. The Roman historian and Bishop Eusebius, who lived in the days of Constantine, writes this:

For as once in the days of Moses and the Hebrew nation who were worshipers of God, he cast Pharaoh's chariots and his host into the waves and drowned his chosen chariot-captains in the Red Sea. So at this time did Maxentius and the soldiers and guards with him sink to the bottom as a stone, when in his flight, before the divinely aided forces of Constantine, he essayed to cross the river which lay in his way.... (EUSEBIUS, The Life of Constantine, Book I, Chapter XXXVIII)

They also believed that the church was to be a theocracy, a nation to overrule nations, as Israel was in the days of King David. This idea appears clear and full in Eusebius's book, The Life of Constantine. Furthermore, the bishops believed that this new theocracy would be governed by the church officers.

Accordingly, the bishops consider themselves as invested with a rank and character similar to those of the high priest among the Jews, while the presbyters represented the priests, and the deacons, the Levites. (Mosheim. Ecclesiastical History, "MacLaine's Translation, Century II," part II, chap II, Par. 4, page 400)

This is how the Bishop of Rome became known as the high priest, or in Latin – Pontifex Maximus. With the combination of Constantine joining church and state, with the erroneous beliefs of the bishops, the seed was firmly sown that would spring up as papal Rome. With Constantine's love work complete, he died in 337 AD. The old Roman Empire could now descend into division.

....the kingdom shall be divided... Daniel 2:41

Now, we will consider the history that fulfills this prophecy. The northern borders of the Roman Empire with the Rhine and Danube Rivers. Julius Caesar named the regions east of the Rhine Germania. Within these regions lay a multitude of ethnic tribes. All these tribes have become known as the Germanic tribes. The Romans called them barbarians. Among these were the Angles, the Jutes, the Saxons, the Thuringians, the Vandals, the Suevi, the Burgundians, the Franks, the Alemanni, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Gepids, the Heruli, the Lombards, and the list goes on.

For decades, various barbaric tribes were making continual incursions into Roman territory. The Roman army maintained the borders until the Huns appeared in Europe. The Huns were a savage, nomadic people who originated from China. As the Huns moved toward the Germanic tribes, this ignited the great migration of the Germanic peoples into the weak Roman Empire. This was only about 25 years after Rome was divided between Constantine's three sons.

In 351 AD, the Franks and Alemanni crossed the Rhine never to return. The Alemanni settled in Agri Decumates, from the river Maine to Lake Constance. They spread to the regions of Alsace-Lorraine and extended to Seine by 455 AD, The Franks settled in Gaul and extended to Somme and Seine by 455 AD. These two tribes are the roots of modern-day France and Germany.

The territory of these two great confederacies, the Franks and the Alemanni, is constantly spoken of by contemporary writers as Frankia and Alemannia. We feel that we are standing on the verge of modern history, when we recognize in these two names the France and the Alemannia of the French newspaper of today. Though other elements have been abundantly blended with each confederacy, it has not altogether forbidden us to recognize in these two barbarous neighbors of the Roman Empire in the fall century the ancestors of the two mighty nations, which in our own day met in thunder on the plains of Gravelotte. – Italy and her Invaders, Vol. I, Part I, Chapter III, Paragraph six.

As the Huns pushed into Europe in 370 AD, fear fell on all the barbaric tribes.

As warriors, the Huns inspired almost unparalleled fear throughout Europe. They were amazingly accurate mounted archers. And their complete command of horsemanship, their ferocious charges and unpredictable retreats, and the speed of their strategical movements brought them overwhelming victories. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, from: <https://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/276414/Hun>

As the Huns advanced into Germania, many tribes were forced aside, like the bow wave of a ship. The Alani were dispersed and joined other Germanic tribes. The Huns drove the Ostrogoths or the Eastern Goths upon the Visigoths, or the Western Goths who were hemmed in by the Danube, but compelled to cross it into Roman territory in 376 AD.

As a band of refugees, the Visigoths looked to the Eastern Roman Emperor for safety. After many years of cruel treatment at the hand of the Eastern Empire, the Visigoth king Alaric arose in 395 AD. Alaric led his people through Pannonia and into Milan by 408. Next, he advanced down the peninsula and sacked Rome in 410 AD. The Visigoths then moved into southern Gaul, and finally settled in Spain by 466 AD.

Their depredations culminated in the sack of Rome in 410. In the same year, Alaric

died and was succeeded by Ataulphus who led the Visigoths to settle first in southern Gaul then in Spain.

(<https://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/630538/Visigoths>)

Not only the Goths, but other Germanic tribes could not withstand the rapid progress of the Huns. The Burgundians, Vandals, Suevi and the Alani temporarily united. On December 31, 406 AD, this confederacy crossed over the frozen Rhine and entered into Roman territory.

The victorious confederates pursued their march. And on the last day of the year 406, in a season when the waters of the Rhine were most probably frozen, they entered without opposition the defenseless provinces of Gaul. This memorable passage of the Suebi, the Vandals, the Alani, the Burgundians who never afterwards retreated, may be considered as the fall of the Roman Empire in the countries beyond the Alps. And the barriers which had so long separated the savage and the civilized nations of the earth were, from that fateful moment, leveled with the ground. (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chap. XXX, par 15 – 19)

The Burgundians settled in Burgundy in 420 AD and went on to spread over West Switzerland and the Valley of the Rhine between 443 and 476 AD. The Suevi, Vandals and Alani moved down into Spain by 409 AD. In 418, the Alani king was killed by the incoming Visigoths. The Alani then offered their crown to the Vandal King Gunderic. As a result, the separate ethnic identity of the Alani was lost to the Vandals.

As the Visigoths moved into Spain, they pushed the Suevi into Galacia, where they settled and established a kingdom which incorporated other small Germanic tribes like the Quadi, Buri, and the Marcomanni who had also left Germania. The Suevi kingdom spread throughout what is now Portugal by 466 AD.

The Vandals on the other hand had an open door into North Africa. So it was in May 429 AD, the Vandals crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and began a settlement. By 439, the Vandals spread their kingdom to the stronghold of Carthage.

The Vandals, as we know, ruled Africa from Carthage. The Burgundians were settled in the valley of the Rhine, and their chief capital was Lyon. The Suebi held the greater part of southern and western Spain, and their capital was Astorga.

While Spain was being overtaken, Rome pulled back its troops from Britain by 409 AD in order to protect territory closer to Rome. This action made the Roman-British people vulnerable. Some Celtic tribes immediately took advantage of this situation. The Picts invaded from the North, and the Scots from the West. Some of the Celtic people were about to meet their match. A number of Germanic tribes had their sights set on Britain. The Saxons were invited by the Britons to help fend off the Picts and the Scots. So it was that the Saxons arrived on British soil.

They came by invitation of Vortigern, king of the Britons. The king gave them land in the southeast of the country on condition that they should fight against the Picts, and they did fight, and had the victory wheresoever they came. And then they sent for the Angles and told them of their worthlessness of the people, and the excellences of the land. This is the Saxon narrative. (History of England, Knight, chap. 5, par. 6)

The Saxons pushed the Picts back past the old Roman frontier, preventing the Celts from gaining control of Britain. But the Saxons turned against the Britons whom they'd come to help. The Angles and Jutes from Denmark and the Frisians from France also joined the Saxons in the invasion of Britain.

The native Britons were then pushed into the southwestern corner, known today as Wales. The Angles and Saxons then dominated the British island. So it is from 449 AD that the history of Angle land, or England begins. Four years after the Saxons placed their feet on British soil, the kingdom of Attila the Hun came to a sudden stop in 453 AD.

As you have seen, many of the Germanic tribes escaped the Huns by migrating into Roman territory, but not all. The Hunnic kingdom dominated and incorporated many tribes, like the Gepids, the Thuringians, the Lombards, the Ostrogoths, the Heruli, and the Rugian.

When Attila the Hun died on his wedding night, his large empire practically vanished, giving independence to the tribes once under his control. In 453 AD, the Ostrogothic kingdom established themselves within the borders of the Roman Empire in the lands of Pannonia.

When the Hunnish empire broke in pieces on the death of Attila, AD 453, the East Goths recovered their full independence. They now entered into relations with the empire and settled on lands in Pannonia. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Part 14, the Goths.)

Likewise, the Lombards regained their freedom after the death of Attila the Hun.

Attila's sudden death, either by hemorrhage or the vengeance of his Burgundian bride, checked the progress of the Hunnish Empire. The Ostrogoths, the Gepidae, and the Langobards obtained their independence after a severe struggle, whilst the remains of the nomadic Huns were lost in the rich pastoral steps of southern Russia. (Weber. Page 4)

The Lombards first settled within the Roman territory of Noricum in 453 AD. The Thuringians filled some of the void left in Germania by the great migration, but did not settle within Roman territory. The Gepids were overthrown by the Ostrogoths, Lombards and an Asian tribe called the Avars. The Rugians also settled outside of

Roman territory.

Lastly, in 475 AD, the Heruli moved into Italy under the king Odoacer. Odoacer overthrew the last Roman Emperor, Romulus, in 476 AD, becoming the first barbarian king over Italy.

Odoacer was the first barbarian who reigned in Italy over a people who had once asserted their just superiority above the rest of mankind. Decline and Fall, Gibbon, chap. 36, pars. 28-33.)

Rome was finally divided. In 476 AD, 10 kingdoms, 10 distinct and independent nations, no more, no less, had fixed themselves within the boundaries of the old Roman empire. And the prophecy that was spoken and written more than a thousand years before was literally fulfilled. These kingdoms were: the Franks, the Alemanni, the Visigoths, the Suevi, the Anglo-Saxons, the Lombards, the Burgundians, the Ostrogoths, the Heruli and the Vandals. Three of these nations, had what is known as Arian religious beliefs, incompatible with the dogmas of the emerging Papacy. Now there is historical evidence that at least some of the people in these three nations were true primitive Christians who kept the seventh-day Sabbath. But Rome called them 'Arians' whether it was true or not. They had to be gotten rid of before that power could totally dominate the consciences of the people. They were the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. By 538 AD the last of them were 'uprooted'.

Although Rome lost its territory to the various nations of Europe, it regained its territory in the hearts and minds of mankind. Divine prophecy foretold Rome would remain until the end of earthly kingdoms. Rome evolved from the old pagan Empire into a religious power that is still felt today. As Rome was being pulled apart by the Germanic invasions, the Church of Rome played an important role to secure its own existence. In 460 AD, Pope Leo the Great said this.

While Romulus and Remus were the twin founders of ancient Rome, it was through the missionary efforts of the apostles Peter and Paul that Rome, the "mother of error," was transformed into the daughter of truth. Rome did not really pave the way for the Christian faith, rather the Christian faith paved the way for Rome to be transformed into the Christian city that it was meant to be. Peter and Paul, not Romulus and Remus, were the men who raised Rome to this glory, that Rome might be made head of the world through the sacred throne of blessed Peter. (Susan Wessel, Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome, p. 368, 369)

But Leo taught that the existence of Rome was a result of the church. He not only taught it, but he demonstrated it by creating peace with the Huns.

It became clear that neither the emperor nor the Magister Militum had any chance of halting the Huns' advance. So Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome and first Pope of the

Christian church, took matters into his own hands. He traveled north to intercede with the king of the Huns on his own. Attila agreed to see him. And the two men met at the Po River. Afterwards, Leo never wrote or spoke of what had passed between them, but when the audience had ended, Attila had agreed for peace. Leo returned to Rome haloed with victory. For the first time in history, a Bishop had taken the emperor's job. As spiritual leader, he could also claim the right to guarantee the church's physical survival. (History of the Medieval World)

So after the division of the Roman Empire, the Church of Rome had secured its place as a power that would last to the end of time.

And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. Daniel 2:42-43

Since the fall of the Roman Empire, many attempts to unite the nations into one distinct nation have been made. However, the prophecy simply states, "But they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." In 711 AD began an Islamic invasion of the old Roman empire's territory. The Muslim power gained control of North Africa, Spain, Portugal and part of France, but failed to subdue the entire region.

In 768, Charlemagne, king of France expanded his territory and became the protector of papal Rome. He made incursions into Muslim Spain and removed the Lombards from powering Italy. Papal Rome established the Holy Roman Empire in an attempt to recreate the old Empire of Rome. In so doing, the pope crowned Charlemagne the first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in December 25, 800 AD.

The Holy Roman Empire wasn't actually Roman, or holy, nor was it a true empire, and failed completely at uniting Europe under one government.

The territories making up the empire lay predominantly in central Europe. At its peak in 1050, under Emperor Henry III, it included the kingdom of Germany, the kingdom of Bohemia, the kingdom of Italy, and the Kingdom of Burgundy. The last holy Roman Emperor was Francis II who abdicated and dissolved the empire in 1806 during the Napoleonic wars.

In 1554, Spain emerged as a dominant power under King Philip II. Through marriage, wars and diplomacy, King Philip gained power over a large portion of Europe. While king of Spain, he became king of Portugal. Through marriage to Queen Mary, he became king of England, Ireland, and claimed to be king of France. He was heir of the Duchy of Burgundy and was lord of 17 provinces of the Netherlands, plus many other titles.

When his wife, Queen Mary, died, he lost his kingship over England. After being rejected by Queen Elizabeth I to marriage, he attempted to regain his power by sending the invincible Spanish Armada against England. The Spanish Armada was pushed north by the English fleet, and was shipwrecked off the west coast of Ireland by a violent storm, destroying Spain's chance of uniting the various nations under one flag.

Napoleon was the next to attempt the uniting of Europe. In 1814, his borders reached their extent. However, as with the Spanish Armada, his plans were thwarted by bad weather. In 1814, his army was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo. Not long after Napoleon, Queen Victoria of England came to power, and eventually became known as the grandmother of Europe.

She and Prince Albert had nine children, and most were married off to other European royal families. Victoria had 42 grandchildren, and a number of them held the crown of European nations, King George V of the UK, Wilhelm II German Emperor and King of Prussia, Sophia Queen of Greece, Maud Queen of Norway, Alexandra Empress of Russia, Marie Queen of Romania.

It is said, all European nations were related by 1914. And although they mingled themselves with the seed of men, it was no help when the first World War started. They simply would not cleave one to another.



In more recent times, Adolf Hitler almost spread the German nation across all of Europe. From 1939, Hitler overran nation after nation, his empire reaching its height in 1941 to '42. Again, God's providence stepped in and a freezing winter crippled his army and caused the death of over a million troops, making it one of the most catastrophic military failures in history. His army never recovered and was soon crushed by English and American forces.

Even on a diplomatic level, true unification has proven impossible. In 1993, the European Union began, but has not consolidated the nations into one cohesive empire. It's important to note that the kingdoms of Europe have extended their influence over the entire world. England took a quarter of the world at its peak. Spain was not far behind. And through the United States, much of the world is heavily influenced by European culture. Germany, France, Portugal and the Netherlands also made many colonies over the world. It is clear that the division of the Roman Empire has influenced the entire world as we know it.

Although there is talk about a one world government, this will never fully come to fruition. It has failed in the past. It will fail in the future, because the prophecy is clear that they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

The climax of the prophecy is now brought to view. When the history of the nations is

considered, it is very clear that kingdoms come and kingdoms go, but here is presented a kingdom that will not be destroyed,

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Daniel 2:44

The reason for this is found in the next verse.

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter... Daniel 2:45

That it was cut out without hands is the reason given that it will never be destroyed. What is the stone and what is meant that it was cut out without hands? Jesus Christ, when speaking to the Jews, tells us what this crushing stone is.

And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Luke 20:17-18

Speaking to the Jews again, Jesus tells us what it means to be cut out without hands.

.....I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. Mark 14:58

In this statement, Jesus made, He was speaking about the Temple of His body.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. John 2:19-21

The meaning is clear. With hands means the thing is accomplished through a human agency. Without hands means through a supernatural agency. This is further proven in the book of Hebrews.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. Hebrews 9:11

Moses built the Hebrew sanctuary, with all its offerings and ceremonies. This was done through the human agency. But when Christ went to heaven after his resurrection, he entered into the heavenly sanctuary. That is referred to as not being made with hands. In other words, there was no human input into the building of it. The mountain that was the origin of the stone is recorded in Hebrews 12 verse 22.

But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. Hebrews 12:22

Therefore, this stone that is cut out without hands refers to the resurrected glorified Christ who will leave the heavenly city, known as Mount Zion, return to earth in a physical, literal and visible manner as king and ruler of this world. This stone is not any particular church or religious organization, because these were all administered by human beings. It is important to note that this final and everlasting dominion is set up without human power or help.

No human agency is responsible for the stone being cut out of the mountain, nor responsible for it being hurled with great force against the image. The setting up of this everlasting kingdom and the destruction of the earthly dominions are accomplished by Jesus Christ himself. The timing of the setting up of this final kingdom is clearly indicated, although no exact time is given, a way mark is clearly laid out before us.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.... Daniel 2:44

The plurality of kings he mentioned refers to the division made after the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 AD. We are currently still living in this European division, and therefore are living in the days of these kings or kingdoms. So the kingdom that is yet to be realized is to be done during the existence of the various nations of Europe, and before any one world government comes to fruition.

Now, some may say that the kingdom was realized during the first advent of Jesus Christ. Christ plainly taught that his kingdom was still future when He had the last supper with His disciples.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. Luke 22:17-18

Again, Christ did not set up this kingdom before His ascension.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you

to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. Acts 1:6-7

Also, Christ did not teach us something to pray for that was already fulfilled when he said, "Pray, thy kingdom come, thy will be done." The Bible teaches us that this kingdom is a matter of promise to the believer in Christ.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? James 2:5

And it was told us in the Scriptures that it would be set up when Christ shall judge the living and the dead.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. 2 Timothy 4:1

Some may ask, "What kingdom was realized when Christ first came to earth?" There are two types of kingdoms brought to light in the Bible, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. One is current, and the other is future. This is simply shown by the text in Hebrews where it says, "To come boldly before the throne of grace." This is present tense. The other is mentioned in Matthew 25:31, "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

This is future. A throne implies a kingdom, and so the kingdom of grace was realized during Jesus's first advent, and the kingdom of glory will be realized at his second advent. The prophecy tells us that during the existence of the various nations of Europe, that Jesus Christ himself will set up a kingdom. It will not be left in the hands of a church or an organization or a board of directors or any other representative. Christ himself personally will administer this kingdom. It also tells us that when He comes, the nations of this world will be destroyed. This is the time when all wickedness and evil will cease to rule our world.

Looking at the history of the world as we have done, there has only been war, bloodshed and wickedness. Mankind does not have the capacity to develop a righteous kingdom in this world. At the time of the destruction of the nations, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome will lose all the legacy they have left behind, and it is then that the gold and silver, brass and iron will cease to exist in all things. While Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome do not have dominion, what they have done while they had dominion is still present in our world today.

Babylon, the source of cultic religion and spiritualism is alive and well today. Persia that pioneered the principles of rulership through global economy and worldwide

trade is also very prominent today. Greece introduced philosophy and mind culture, coupled with sports and Olympic Games that has never been lost in our world. Rome, with the principles of an iron government, clothed in the garb of democracy and republicanism is also alive and well today. However, when Jesus Christ comes, all this, the gold and the silver, the brass and the iron will be destroyed and forgotten in the kingdom to come.

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them... Daniel 2:35

After nations have been blown away, and the earth has been clean from their existence, then Mount Zion will fill the whole earth.

...the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Daniel 2:35

God has made a guarantee that that which is yet to take place is sure to happen, and the prophecy is true and faithful. Daniel gives this guarantee to the king of Babylon.

...The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. Daniel 2:45

The prophecy has been accurate for well over 2,000 years, and it would be very unwise to dismiss the last part of the prophecy as untrue. In the book of Psalms, it gives us good instruction as to the last part of Daniel chapter two.

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. Psalms 118:8-9

The instruction was to trust the Lord. The center verse of the King James Bible is Psalms 118 verse eight, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." God loves you and wants you to have an expected end. Unlike all the nations before us, we need to take heed to the warnings, so that we can be with Christ in His glorious kingdom.

Section Two

All Roads Lead to Rome

Well known as an Ecclesiastical World Power, Papal Rome boasts of being the sole influencer in most Global matters. Since its inception, the Vatican has always been on the forefront as the presumptuous “saviour of humanity.” By solving major conflicts involving dominant World Superpowers, their Pontiffs have often been crowned as the “Champions of Peace.”

Papal Rome makes a great contribution in regard to making of International decisions since it holds an important place within global administrative bodies such as the United Nations.

Their ideologies have been supplanted in the minds of people and many world leaders through the influence they have on the Education System, International politics, Socioeconomic activities, and the Media.

Together with the Vatican, the United States of America has also been looked upon during many calamities and catastrophic events as a “timely saviour.”

In reference to Rome, Revelation chapter 13, verse 2 says:

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. Revelation 13:2

This shows that the power and authority behind all the successes and dominance of Rome comes from “The Dragon,” that is, the devil himself. The Holy Scriptures also show that during this period, many nations will pay allegiance to the devil by bowing themselves to this World-Power that has all of its tainted glory acquired from the adversary of all mankind.

And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? Revelation 13:4

Finally, through a deceitful garb of “charity and love for nature and man,” this well known Religio-political world power will violate man's freedom of worship and be politically aided to amend the law of the land thus establishing a governmental

system contrary to the dictates of the Holy Scriptures. That's the time in human history when every living person will have to make a choice based on what he or she believes in.

With a new wave of International Religio-political reforms, all these things must come to pass consummating the maxim that all roads lead to Rome





CHAPTER THREE

Everyday Contentious Topics

Section One

The Ten Commandments

Today the Decalogue is being forcibly removed from schools, government institutions and other public places. Having no Moral law taught or displayed cannot be without repercussions as we now find pornography, violence and crime becoming accepted as normality in television, movies, music and the internet. If all this moral decay isn't disturbing enough, we now observe Christian organizations with their internet sites exhorting that we no longer have to observe the Ten Commandments. Some of these web sites not only attack the validity of God's law of liberty but also condemn other Churches that do teach loving obedience to the law as Jesus Christ instructed. A few decades ago, anyone claiming the law was abolished was accused of antinomianism. Yet today, we see more and more Christians embracing the thought of not having to obey this magnificent law that God personally spoke and wrote in stone at all. To keep or not to keep? This has become the pivotal issue as we approach the closing crisis of Earth's history.

HOW CAN WE KNOW THE TEN COMMANDMENTS BIBLE TRUTH?

Some Christians have been heard saying, "The Holy Spirit told me we don't need to obey the Ten Commandments anymore." With so many contradictory teachings, how can one possibly know what is true or false anymore? There is of course only one way and that is the Holy Bible. God's Spirit will never tell us anything that is contrary to His Word. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Hebrews 13:8. The Holy Spirit of God will always be in harmony with the Holy Word of God. The Bible is and should always be our final authority. (2 Timothy 3:16) Pushing aside all other areas of confusion for the moment, let's go straight to the end of the story and read the final word on what the Holy Bible says in regards to these ten great laws written on stone by God Himself. Note from these easy to understand eschatological verses who enters the city gates of heaven and eats from the tree of life and who does not.

"Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Revelation 22:14-15

Many today are no longer looking for truth, but instead are looking for a smooth, easy, comfortable religion that will allow them to live the way they please and still give assurance of salvation. There is indeed no true religion that can do that for them. One will say the Decalogue is a law of love guiding us in how to love God and man.

Another will say there is now a new law in Christ and all we have to do is love one another. And yet still others will say it is no longer ten but nine Commandments or they were all nailed to the cross. So much contradiction yet most do not see Satan at work here. Why would anyone who truly loves God and their neighbour want to abolish God's law of liberty anyway? The question to such people should be, "which of the laws that God wrote in stone do you have a problem with and do not want to obey?" Unless there are one or more laws one does not want to obey, then one should have no problem with the law that Paul says reveals what sin is. (Romans 7:7) And if all we have to do is love God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves, does this mean we can take the Lord's name in vain, worship idols or even deny God the quality time of praise and worship He wants from us on His Holy day? What about others; does it mean we can lie, steal, murder, disrespect our parents or sleep with another's spouse? If one loves God with all their heart and others as themselves, they will be obeying every single one of them. This is why Jesus said in Matthew 22:40 after quoting these Old Testament words that ALL the law hang on these two Commandments. Some think the words of Jesus here exclude the fourth Commandment but Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5 which reads, "And you shall love the LORD your God with all thine heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Did loving God with all thine heart include the fourth then? There can be no doubt as Deuteronomy 6:5 is just seventeen verses after the second reading of the Ten Commandments.

HAVE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS BEEN CHANGED?

Speaking of the fourth, how many Churches today know that Revelation 13:2 states that Satan through pagan Rome would give power and authority to a Church that changed the Commandments? About 400 years ago every single Protestant Church knew this yet today Satan has succeeded in having almost all lose this truth. Our adversary's primary goal was to have them change the fourth Commandment which Daniel 7:25 informs us would happen. Satan had a purpose in this and over 50,000,000 Christian saints were murdered and tortured as heretics during the dark ages and yet most people today have no idea why.

Jesus while referring to the Ten Commandments used these easy to understand words. Note that in John 14:15, that He is actually quoting from the second Commandment, "If you love me, keep my Commandments." and in John 15:10, "If you keep my Commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's Commandments, and abide in his love." Jesus obeyed the Father's Commandments and He asks us to demonstrate our love for Him by doing the same. We also find in 1 John 2:4, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." The words of this last verse are something to consider very seriously. For example. What are the implications of not observing God's law considering that Jesus and His Word are truth? (John 14:6 and 17:17) The words of Christ in Matthew 7:21-23 come to mind where He says that not every one that called Him Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. He refers to

those who claimed to know Him and even did miracles in His name. But Jesus will profess to them that He never knew them and instruct them to depart from Him because they practiced lawlessness. Very sobering words indeed.

Note that all the above verses use the Greek word entole (pronounced en-tol-ay) that is always used when referring to the Ten Commandments in the New Testament, thus one can see how God feels about our loving obedience to His law.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments: and his Commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3

Satan is the great deceiver that Jesus said if possible could deceive even the elect (Matthew 24:24) and it is he that desires to keep this world in chaos and disobeying our Lord and Saviour. He began attacking the law of God from the very beginning starting with the Commandment that defines worship of our Creator. Timothy warned us that the time would come when Christians will choose not to endure sound doctrine but instead pursue the lusts of the human heart, seeking after false teachers with itching ears and will turn their ears from the truth in preference of fables. (2 Timothy 4:3-4) I firmly believe that scripture reveals that we are in those days now. It is my heartfelt prayer that you glean all you can from these pages with a desire for the real truth. (John 14:6 and 17:17)

DO WE HAVE TO OBEY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

What we need is the searchlight of God's Word to shine into our moral darkness so He can reveal His truth to us. Were the Ten Commandments nailed to the cross? Is the very sin that started with Adam and Eve and nailed our loving Saviour to the cross something God no longer cares about? Did Jesus die so we could continue living in lawlessness? Is this what the Bible really says about the Ten Commandments, or are these just lies from our adversary who is determined to keep and steal everyone he can from God's kingdom, especially as we draw closer to this Earth's final days? Romans 6:23 says Jesus died to redeem us from the penalty of sin which is death by taking the penalty for our sin upon Himself, not so we could continue living in sin, which is breaking the Ten Commandments. 1 John 3:4.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23

The author of Hebrews 10:26-29 exhorts that to continue in wilful sin is to tread the Son of God under foot and count the blood of the covenant by which we are sanctified as an unholy thing despite God's grace. So how will Jesus respond to those who worship Him and even do miracles in His name but had the opinion they could practice lawlessness by wilfully disobeying the Ten Commandments?

"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;

but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Matthew 7:21-23

Here Jesus speaks of those who called Him "Lord" but did not do the will of the Father. He then describes those who would seek entrance into the kingdom claiming to be workers of miracles in His name, but He would sorrowfully say, "I never knew you: depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!" These are words we never want to hear Jesus declare because we practiced lawlessness by wilfully disobeying the Ten Commandments, but how many of the Ten Commandments does one have to break to be guilty of sin?

James 2:10-12 says,

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:10-12

Every single person will be judged by the mighty moral code of God's Ten Commandments. To break just one is to be guilty of sin. The Bible demonstrates that the Ten Commandments are like a chain of ten links. When one link is broken, the whole chain is broken. And so it is with the Ten Commandments. Those who stand in the judgment will have to meet the acid test of the Ten Commandments. If a practicing thief should seek entrance into the kingdom, he would be rejected. This is why Paul says thieves will not inherit the heavenly city. Furthermore, the Bible specifically declares that idolaters, adulterers, liars and covetous men will not be in the kingdom. Why? Because the Ten Commandments forbid those things and men will be judged finally by this law. Not one single person will be admitted into heaven who is WILFULLY violating any one of the Ten Commandments because breaking one of the Ten Commandments is breaking them all. We find a good example of this in Exodus 16:4-30. These non-Jews thought that God did not mean what He said when He said the Seventh day. So how did God respond to them? He accused them of breaking ALL His Commandments and laws.

Some may object that this is making works the basis of entering the kingdom. But not so. This is really making love the qualifying factor. Jesus said that the greatest Commandment of all is to love God supremely. Quoting from the second of the Ten Commandments, Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my Commandments." John 14:15. Those who practice any known sin are really confessing that they do not love God with all their heart, soul and mind. So you see it is actually the lack of love that shuts them out and not the act of disobedience that exposes that lack. Only when love is motivating the obedience does it become acceptable to God. Any other work is man's vain attempt to earn salvation and to deny the efficacy of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

What about those who teach the law is abolished or condemn others that do teach and obey the law? The words of Jesus are not ambiguous. He informs us that He did not come to destroy the law and we are not only to obey the Ten Commandments but TEACH them also. Again we are warned that the consequence is not entering the kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:17-29 reads,

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least [by those] in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell fire... You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye offend you, pluck it out, and cast it from you: for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be cast into hell." Matthew 5:17-29

Not only are the Ten Commandments to last as long as heaven and earth but did you notice that our Lord and Saviour raises the bar even higher and magnifies the law as prophesied? See Isaiah 42:21. Example: From do not commit adultery to having committed adultery in your heart by looking lustfully at a woman. Jesus also informs us that the result of living in deliberate sin is "Hell Fire" and that it is better that one of your members should perish than for our whole body to be cast into Hell. My question is, "Why would any Christian try to justify disobedience to God's Ten Commandments anyway?" If we do not desire with all our heart to do this now, why would we be any different in the kingdom of heaven? The Bible says that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16) and that His Ten Commandments are Ten Royal laws of love. (James 2:8) All the attributes of the Ten Commandments are found in God's very own nature and that is why God cannot tolerate sin as it is a defilement of His very own character. To try and abolish or attack the Ten Commandments is to also attack God and His character.

Hebrews 10:26-29 says,

"For if we sin WILFULLY after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth NO more sacrifice for sins, ... He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you,

shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" Hebrews 10:26-29

The Bible tells us how much sorer the punishment shall be for wilful sin and it is my heartfelt prayer that no one takes that path. Some may exhort that it is not possible to keep the Ten Commandments. Because we are sinners this is impossible to do on our own, but God's love changes us and enables us to obey His Commandments. God's Holy Spirit can pour into your heart an abundance of self denying love so that you will be able to love God most of all and your neighbour as yourself. The Bible also informs us that all things are possible through Christ who strengthens us and renews our hearts and minds making us a new creature. See 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Philippians 4:13.

SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

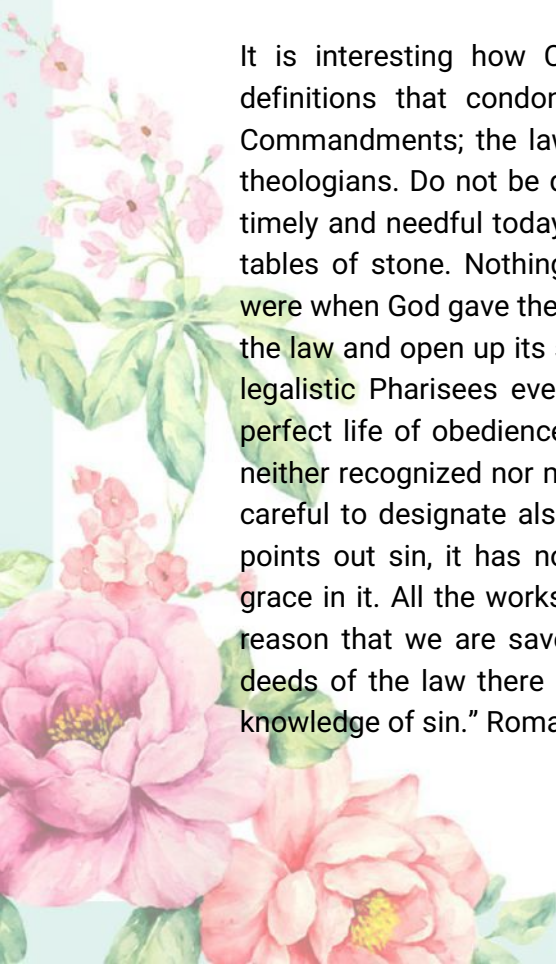
Why was Jesus Christ condemned to die? What is the real purpose of the Ten Commandments and the reason for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the real truth on how we are saved? Multitudes have heard emotional discourses on sin and salvation but they still do not understand the logic and reason that required a blood sacrifice. So let's push aside all the rubbish and confusion that has obscured the truth on how men are saved and see what the Bible really says.

Just imagine the horror of standing before a judge and hearing the sentence of death pronounced against you. Can you imagine how you would feel? Probably not. But you have felt the driving guilt and fear when God's Word stabs you with this sentence: "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. So why do we feel fear and guilt? Because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23.

The words are there and the meaning cannot be misunderstood. The word "all" might just as well be spelled James Kinyanjui or Mary Kioko or whatever your name may be. The shocking fact is that you are under the sentence of death! You have been found guilty before the law and there is no court of appeal in the world that can reverse the sentence and find you not guilty. The fact is you are guilty as sinful. According to 1 John 3:4, "sin is the transgression of the law," and you must plead guilty to breaking the law. Whose law did you break? Paul answers quickly, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Romans 7:7. There's the answer! The Ten Commandments is the law that was broken and it demands death for the transgressor. In desperation the sinner searches for a way to be justified in the sight of that broken Ten Commandment law. How can the sentence of death be turned aside? Can man atone for his own sins by obeying the Ten Commandments of God for the rest of his life? Back comes the answer in language that no person can possibly misinterpret: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Romans 3:20.

There is a reason why works will not justify a soul. If a man is found guilty of stealing and is sentenced to ten years in jail, he can indeed justify himself by works. By serving his ten year sentence, the man may satisfy the claims of the law. He is considered perfectly justified and innocent because he has worked out his deliverance by fulfilling the pronounced sentence. In the same manner, a murderer can be justified by works if he serves the twenty five years of his sentence. But suppose the sentence is death instead of twenty five years. Can the prisoner still justify himself by works? Not a chance! Even if he should work for one hundred years at hard labour, the law would still demand death. The truth is that "without shedding of blood is no remission. ... So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Hebrews 9:22-28.

This is why works can never save the sinner. The penalty for sin is not ten years in prison or twenty five years of hard labour. The sentence is death and the law cannot be satisfied except by the shedding of blood. That unchangeable law with its unrelenting death sentence could no more be removed than the throne of God could be toppled. The guilt of the past cannot be erased by resolutions of good behaviour in the future. The sinner is forced to confess that he owes something that he cannot pay. The law demands death and he cannot satisfy it without forfeiting his own life for eternity. Now we come to that question that has created confusion for multitudes of Christians: If the works of the law cannot save a person, is it therefore necessary to keep the Ten Commandments law? Apparently this was a burning issue in the early Church, because Paul asked the same question in Romans 6:1. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" In other words, does grace give us a license to disobey the Ten Commandments of God? His answer is: "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"



It is interesting how Christians in this age of relativism can invent their own definitions that condone lawbreaking. The Bible says sin is violating the Ten Commandments; the law which has been described as irrelevant by many modern theologians. Do not be deceived. Every one of those great moral precepts is just as timely and needful today as they were when God wrote them on those imperishable tables of stone. Nothing has ever happened to make them less binding than they were when God gave them. In fact, we have already seen how Jesus came to magnify the law and open up its spiritual application, making it more comprehensive than the legalistic Pharisees ever imagined. Under the distilling influence of Jesus Christ's perfect life of obedience, we can see the spiritual details of law keeping which are neither recognized nor made possible apart from Him. At this point we must be very careful to designate also what the Ten Commandments cannot do. Even though it points out sin, it has no power to save from sin. There is no justifying, cleansing grace in it. All the works of the law cannot save a single soul. Why? For the simple reason that we are saved by grace through faith, as a free gift. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20.

Do not stumble over this crucial point. We cannot earn forgiveness by working hard to obey. No sinner can gain favour and acceptance with God because he keeps the law. The Ten Commandments were not made for the purpose of saving or justifying. They were made to show us our need of cleansing and to point us to the great source of cleansing, Jesus Christ our Lord. The Bible speaks of the law as a mirror to show us what kind of persons we really are. "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." James 1:23-25.

Looking into the mirror all day or rubbing the mirror all over your face will never provide any cleansing. The work of the mirror is to reveal the spot and to point the dirty one to the sink for actual cleansing. The Ten Commandments law in like manner can only condemn the sinner by giving him knowledge of his or her condition and then pointing them to the cross for true cleansing. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9. Paul further emphasizes this point in Romans 3:20-28 "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin....Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

So Paul states that we are not saved by keeping the Ten Commandments, but as we have seen, we cannot be saved if we do not desire to keep them either. This confuses many people so let's put this yet another way. If we did have to rely on keeping the law to be saved, we would be eternally lost as there was only One who could and did keep them perfectly. This is why we are saved through FAITH in Christ's redeeming sacrifice and the GRACE of God. So does this mean the Ten Commandments are made null and void through faith? We would certainly have a large amount of contradictory scripture if this were so. Using the NKJV, Paul leaves no room for misunderstanding and finalizes Romans chapter three stating, "Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." Romans 3:31.

God's grace is His unmerited, undeserved favour that is preceded by the act of genuine repentance of our sin. If there were no law, there would be no need for God's grace. See Romans 6:1-2; 14-15. Note also the Biblical definition of sin. (1 John 3:4) As one can see, for sin to exist there has to be law because "sin is lawlessness." Paul is therefore saying that the concept of God's "grace" or forgiveness establishes that the Ten Commandments are still in effect as sin is breaking His law. God's grace through faith requires a law that defines the sins to be forgiven. Without the law we would have no way of understanding what sin is or is not because "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20. So repeating Paul, "Do we then make void the law

through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”

ARE WE SAVED BY GRACE OR WORKS?

The issue of grace, works and faith is no doubt one of the most misunderstood topics in scripture. Works is commonly understood as trying to earn your salvation by keeping the law, which would require one to keep it perfectly and hence why it is called works. Thus works can never get one into the kingdom and also because it is not motivated by love, which is the reason why we should desire to keep the law. (John 14:15) When we unintentionally break God's law, we repent and by faith in Christ's redeeming sacrifice we receive God's grace. So reading Paul's writings, one would conclude that we are not saved by works but by faith which results in God's grace, which is true but here is where the confusion comes in. James 2:26 says, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Thus many have concluded that Paul is contradicting James. But Paul is referring to not being saved by the works of the law but by faith in Christ's redeeming sacrifice. James on the other hand is showing that in addition to faith itself comes the fruit of faith, which is that of good works. Hence James is not referring to the works of the law but to that of good works which comes from faith in Christ. Faith and works in this context go hand in hand as you cannot have one without the other.

The Ten Commandments truth in relation to faith and grace is so simple and obvious that it should require no repetition, but despite this you still often hear the argument in an effort to belittle the law of God: “Well, since we are not under the law but under grace, we do not need to keep the Ten Commandments any longer.” Is this a valid point? The Bible certainly does say that we are not under the law, but does that imply that we are free from the obligation to obey it? The text is found in Romans 6:14-15. “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”

How easily one could prevent confusion if we just accepted exactly what the Bible says. After stating that we are not under the law but under grace, Paul gives his own explanation. He says, “What then?” This simply means, “How are we to understand this?” Then notice his answer. In anticipation that some would misconstrue his words to mean that you can break the law because you are under grace, he says, “Shall we sin (break the Ten Commandments law) because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.” In the strongest possible language, Paul states that being under grace does not give a license to break the Ten Commandments. Yet this is exactly what so many believe today despite Paul's specific warning.

Since being under grace does not exempt us from keeping the Ten Commandments, then what does Paul mean by saying that Christians are not under the law? He gives that answer in Romans 3:19. “Now we know that what things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the

world may become guilty before God.” Here Paul equates being under the law with “being guilty before God.” In other words, those who are under the law are guilty of breaking it and are under the condemnation of it. This is why Christians are not under the law. They are not breaking it; not guilty and condemned by it. Therefore, they are not under it but are under the power of grace instead. Later in his argument, Paul points out that the power of grace is greater than the power of sin. This is why he states so emphatically, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Grace overrules the authority of sin giving power to obey the Ten Commandments. This is the effective reason that we are not under the law’s guilt and condemnation and also why Paul states that we will not continue to sin.

Suppose a murderer has been sentenced to death in the electric chair. Waiting for the execution the man would truly be under the law in every sense of the word; under the guilt, under the condemnation, under the sentence of death, etc. Just before the execution date the governor reviews the condemned man’s case and decides to pardon him. In the light of extenuating circumstances the governor exercises his prerogative and sends a full pardon to the prisoner. Now he is no longer under the law but under grace. The law no longer condemns him. He is considered totally justified as far as the charges of the law are concerned. He is free to walk out of the prison and no policeman can lay hands upon him. But now that he is under grace and no longer under the law, can we say that he is free to break the law? Indeed not! In fact, that pardoned man will be doubly obligated to obey the law because he has found grace from the governor. In gratitude and love he will be very careful to honour the law of that state which granted him grace.

Now for one of the most fallacious propositions ever set forth relating to the Ten Commandments law. Countless sincere Christians have accepted the idea that the Old Testament encompasses the dispensation of works and that the New Testament provides for a dispensation of grace. Under this garbled plan, people were saved by works in the Old Testament and by grace in the New Testament. This is simply not true. The Bible holds forth only one beautiful, perfect plan for anybody to be saved, and that is by grace through faith. Heaven will not be divided between those who got there by works and those who got there by faith. Every single soul among the redeemed will be a sinner saved by grace. Those who entered into salvation in the Old Testament were those who trusted the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ, and they demonstrated their faith by bringing a lamb and slaying it. They looked forward in faith to the atoning death of Jesus. We look back in faith to the same death and are saved in exactly the same way. Be sure that the entire redeemed host throughout eternity will be singing the same song of deliverance and exalting the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 says,

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own

lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:3-4

Jesus exhorts again and again to "let no man deceive you." We are also explicitly warned that in the end days Satan will have false prophets doing many signs and wonders and miracles and if possible even the elect will be deceived. Satan can and does counterfeit most miracles of God including healing and tongues and more and more Christians are seeking aimlessly after these signs and wonders without testing the source.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:4,

"A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed." Matthew 16:4

If your Church teaches that the Ten Commandments are abolished and has a large emphasis on miracles, how do you know that Satan is not responsible for any of these miracles in an attempt to keep one sidetracked and deceived on the real important issues such as truth about obedience to God in love regarding the Ten Commandments?

If Satan's grand finale is to deceive the multitudes by signs and wonders as explained in Revelation, wouldn't he be working on the lusts of the human heart now to get us thinking in this manner so his final master deception will be like lambs to the slaughter for those who do not diligently study the Word like the Bereans and know what to expect?

"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures EVERY DAY to see if what Paul said was true." Acts 17:11

The eternal nature of the Ten Commandments can also be seen from John's vision of the time of the end where he sees the temple in heaven open and very particularly he sees "the ark of his testament." This is the true ark of which the earthly one was only a copy and where in the sanctuary is the depository for the original Ten Commandments, God's immutable moral law for all men of all ages. This is very significant when you consider that God's Ten Commandments are still in place in the heavenly sanctuary. They have not been discarded, destroyed or rewritten.

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." Revelation 11:19

In the past, Christians have quietly said that there seems to be a hidden agenda to

remove God and the Ten Commandments from the government but now the agenda does not seem quite so hidden. The recent purging of the Ten Commandments from public institutions has aroused a passionate outcry from many groups. Why? We have witnessed the grim results of our silence. In the world today we have murder, suicide, rape, adultery, fornication, thefts, muggings, idolatry, pornography, child abuse and classmates shooting classmates. There are even elderly men and women being beaten in their homes for a few dollars. Cars are not just stolen secretly anymore; they are stolen right out from under you. It is not even safe in your own home. You can understand those belonging to this world not wanting to have any law to follow and the results are catastrophic as we can see by just looking at the world around us. But what sort of message does it send to the world when Christians start teaching that God's great moral standards, the Ten Commandments are abolished? So again, what are the consequences and whose kingdom benefits from this teaching? God's or Satan's? The answers to these questions should be pretty obvious and also which spirit one is listening to when one teaches that these glorious Ten Commandments written on sapphire stone are now history.

Section Two

Colossians 2:16 Truth

This verse would have to be the most abused and misunderstood Bible passage in regards to the ordinances of the ceremonial law. So what actually is the ceremonial law, and is it possible for this passage on Colossians 2:16 to refer to the Ten Commandments or just the Lord's Sabbath as some claim?

The ceremonial law with its sacrificial system pointed the people to the coming of Christ. Every time the blood of an animal was shed in the old Jewish temple, it was a reminder to the onlooker that One would come and die for his sin. Hence, John the Baptist pointed to our Lord and declared the significant words, "Behold the Lamb of God." When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, the veil of the great temple curtain was torn from top to bottom to signify that the entire ceremonial system was forever finished. No longer do the priests need to offer up sacrifices.

How do the Ten Commandments and this Ceremonial law relate to each other? If a man sinned, he broke LAW No. 1 - the Moral law of the Ten Commandments. So then he brought his offering, according to LAW No. 2 - the law of sacrifices, and he received forgiveness. LAW No. 1 defines sin, for sin is the transgression of the moral law. (1 John 3:4) LAW No. 2 defined sacrifices, the Ceremonial law which was the remedy for sin. When the Israelite sinned, he broke the first law. To secure forgiveness he had to obey the second law. So here are two very distinct laws.

When the One great and perfect final Sacrifice was offered that Friday afternoon and the true Passover Lamb bowed His head and died and cried out, "It is finished", the now obsolete ceremonial law that pointed the people to His sacrificial death was nailed to the cross. Jesus is now the permanent remedy for when we break LAW No. 1. When we now sin, we genuinely repent and ask Jesus for forgiveness.

While the word ceremonial is spoken frequently of in scripture, the term ceremonial law is not. In the KJV Bible, it is normally translated to ordinances which Strong's dictionary translates to as being a law of ordinances or ceremonial law. As it was a system of commandments given by God to Israel, there can be no doubt that it was a law which involved ceremonies so it will be frequently called the ceremonial law. Since this law ended at the cross it was only observed by literal Israel.

The key to understanding Colossians 2:16 is found two verses earlier in Colossians 2:14. The key phrase is, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances." The Greek word

for blotting is “exaleipho”, pronounced “ex-al-i'-fo”. Strong's dictionary gives the definition; “to smear out, that is, obliterate (erase tears, figuratively pardon sin): - blot out, wipe away.” The next keyword in this verse is “handwriting” and the Greek word is “cheirographon”, pronounced “khi-rog'-raf-on” and the definition is, “something handwritten (chirograph), that is, a manuscript (specifically a legal document or bond [figuratively]): - handwriting.” And the last and final very important word we need to look at is “ordinances”, Greek word is “dogma”, pronounced “dog'-mah” and the Strong's definition is “a law (civil, ceremonial or ecclesiastical): - decree, ordinance.”

Did you note the last one? It means “a law”, but what type of law? The two words we should be very familiar with now are “ceremonial” i.e., “ceremonial law” and “ordinances” which comprised the things contained in the ceremonial law.

The Thayer dictionary is even clearer and you will note that it does not say the Ten Commandments. It directly and unmistakably says the “Law of Moses” outright. Thayer Definition: “The rules and requirements of the Law of Moses; carrying a suggestion of severity and of threatened judgment.”

So what was nailed to the cross as Paul explains in verse 14? The “Law of Moses,” which is also called the “Mosaic Law”, the “Book of the Law” and as we have just seen by the definition given by the KJV Bible, the “Ordinances.” There should be no doubt that the ceremonial law is not the Moral law and that Paul has said that we no longer need to observe the holy feast days that were associated with the ordinances as some erroneously teach. This was the whole problem that Paul was addressing as some Jews were still doing this.

The ceremonial law was for Israel alone as the Gospel did not go to the Gentiles for three and a half years after Jesus died on the cross. This is why there is so much confusion between the ceremonial law and the Ten Commandments. That one and final perfect sacrifice of Jesus ended this whole sacrificial system, thankfully giving us no requirement to obey this law. Since Jesus replaced this law, He has become the remedy for sin, which is the breaking of God's Ten Commandment law.

So just to make sure there can be no misunderstanding. The ceremonial law was practised when one sinned and that sin was the breaking of the Ten Commandments. So which one of these is a ceremonial law? Which one do we practise if we sinned before the cross? Do we go and commit adultery to make reconciliation for our sin? Or do we take a lamb for sacrifice to the temple priest to cover our sin such as adultery? Note also that our God “is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33) and did not place a ceremonial, sacrificial law that was practised when we sinned, with a law that when broken was sin. We can rest knowing God is not the author of confusion and all Ten Commandments are moral laws.

Now that we have a clear distinction between these two laws, we can now look at all

the verses that such an astonishing amount of controversy occurs over. The verses in contention are Colossians 2:16, Galatians 4:9-10 and Romans 14:5. Since Colossians 2:14-17 is the main area of confusion we will cover that first.

Colossians 2:16 reads "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink [offerings], or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:" And so the belief of some is the fourth Commandment was deleted from stone. What was actually done away with here was the ordinances (ceremonial law). This is clearly seen by noting what Paul said two verses earlier. Colossians 2:14 reads, "blotting out the handwriting (has to be Moses handwriting) of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." Paul then goes on to say, so "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:"

Luke 1:6 KJV also demonstrates that the ordinances and the Ten Commandments are two totally different things. It states, "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." And Hebrews 9:1-2 says, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary." The first Covenant had also the ordinances as well as the Ten Commandments, but the New Covenant has only the Ten Commandments that God now writes in our hearts so it will be our hearts desire to obey Him. God said that the fault with the Old Covenant was the people would not obey it and nowhere does God say that His law lost any Commandments. When God said he will write His law on our hearts, He meant all of His Ten Commandment law.

Did you note in Hebrews 9:1-2 that these ordinances belonged to the Hebrew sanctuary sacrificial system. It was the ceremonial law that was nailed to the cross and "not one jot or one tittle" of any of the Ten Commandments. The obvious differences between the Ten Commandments and the ordinances of the ceremonial law are that the Commandments — The Ten Commandments — were placed in the Ark, were written by God's finger, written in stone, placed inside the Ark of the Covenant, are love, eternal, for all people and is sin to break them. The ordinances were in Moses' handwriting, written in a book, placed in a pocket on the outside of the Ark of the Covenant, are not love, not eternal, were only for the Jews and were practised because of sin. When that One great and perfect and final Sacrifice was offered that Friday afternoon, when Jesus cried out, "It is finished," and the true Passover Lamb bowed His head and died, that now obsolete ceremonial law that pointed people to His sacrificial death was nailed to the cross once and for all.

So is the phrase "sabbath days" in Colossians 2:16 referring to the Lord's Sabbath? Definitely not. Firstly, every Greek scholar will tell you that "sabbaths" is unquestionably plural here, which there were several in the ordinances of the

ceremonial law, and secondly, everything in verse 16 belonged purely and solely to the ordinances, which Paul specifically tells us is in verse 14. Paul also exhorts that the contents of verse 16 was nailed to the cross because that is what had to be practised because of sin prior to the cross, and of course why it ended at the cross. Sin is breaking of the Ten Commandments (1 John 3:4) and the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments. Think very carefully about what God actually calls HIS Sabbath. We find more than once the phrase, "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God:" It is the Lord's Sabbath! The ceremonial sabbaths belonged to Israel only and were very significantly called "Israelite sabbaths" and are never referred to as the Sabbath of the Lord yet alone the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

Studying the table below will give clarity between the ceremonial sabbaths mentioned in Colossians 2:16 and the fourth Commandment, the Sabbath.

Sabbath of the Lord	Ceremonial Sabbaths
Spoken by God personally (Exodus 20:1, 8-11)	Spoken by Moses (Exodus 24:3)
Written on stone by God Himself (Exodus 31:18)	Written by Moses' hand on paper (Exodus 24:4)
Put inside the Ark of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 10:5)	Stored on the outside of the Ark (Deuteronomy 31:26)
Was made at creation (Genesis 2:1-3)	Were made after Sinai (Exodus 20:24)
Breaking the Sabbath is sin (1 John 3:4)	These were kept because of sin (See Leviticus)
It is a law of love (Matthew 22:35-40, Isaiah 58:13-14)	They were not love (Colossians 2:14, Galatians 4:9-10)
It is a law of liberty (freedom) (James 1:25, 2:10-12)	They were bondage (Galatians 4:9-10, Colossians 2:14)
The Sabbath is for everyone (Mark 2:27, Hebrews 4:9-10)	Only for the children of Israel and Jews (Old Testament)
God calls it MY Sabbath (Exodus 31:13, Ezekiel 20:20)	God calls them HER Sabbath's (Hosea 2:11, Lamentations 1:7)
The Sabbath is eternal (Exodus 31:16-17, Isaiah 66: 22-23)	We're nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14, Ephesians 2:15)

Consider the following three questions:

1. Why didn't God put His Sabbath with all the ceremonial sabbaths in Moses hand writing if it was to end at the cross?
2. Why didn't God put His Sabbath with the Jewish ceremonial sabbaths that ended at the cross, if His Sabbath was only for the Jews?
3. Why would our omniscient (all knowing) God put His Sabbath in His eternal law of love if it is not eternal or not love?

Observe how every single part of Colossians 2:16 and associated verses do refer to the ceremonial law.

Unfortunately, most modern Bible translations have translated the word meat in verse sixteen incorrectly and most non-Jews get this wrong and this includes some theologians. Ask some Jews that understand Hebrew. The King James Bible is one of the few translations that does translate these words correctly and is therefore recommended in these studies. So much gets lost when the translators do not have a good understanding of Jewish culture and terminology. To be referring to clean or unclean foods here would be totally out of context for this passage. But when kept in context, every single point here refers to the various holy feast days and the sacrificial sanctuary system. Further clarification can be found in the book of Hebrews. Note that the context of this passage is undoubtedly the sanctuary service in regards to sacrifices and offerings, of which Jesus Christ became the final perfect sacrifice for us.

Paul is possibly the author of Hebrews and we see that the meat and drink has to be meat and drink offerings by the unmistakable context of this passage in Hebrews 9:7-14 below. The author speaks of meat and drink [offerings] and carnal ordinances which were imposed until the time of reformation, being Jesus Christ who obtained eternal redemption for us and brought an end to the sacrifices prescribed by the ordinances of the ceremonial law once and for all.

This continues to illustrate the perfect context of Colossians 2:16 and as per Colossians 2:14, we see everything described is part of the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which Paul said in this verse was against us and contrary to us, and it was taken out the way and nailed to the cross by Jesus' perfect sacrifice.

"But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Hebrews 9:7-14

As you can plainly see, what is spoken of in Colossians and Hebrews are references to meat and drink offerings that were part of the sanctuary service and were in the ordinances of the ceremonial law. This is all that can be referred to and when done so fits the context perfectly of both passages as it remains harmoniously in context with the sanctuary service.

So let's re-examine Colossians 2:14-17 again to see if everything does actually refer to the ceremonial law by the fact that the context of the passage remains the same throughout. "Blotting out the handwriting", the ceremonial law was written in Moses handwriting. "Ordinances", Strong's dictionary also directly translates this word to ceremonial law, "that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way", the ceremonial law is now against us and contrary to us, as Christ has become that One and perfect sacrifice for us. "Nailing it to his cross", and of course now that Christ has become that perfect sacrifice for us, no longer are meat and drink offerings and animal sacrifices and all associated holy days necessary, so the ceremonial law was nailed to the cross. Moving onto verse sixteen, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink", and as we have now seen were part of the ceremonial law. "Or in respect of an holyday", these holy days included such days as Passover, Feast of Weeks and many others. "Or of the new moon", new moon celebrations were also part of the ordinances. "Or of the sabbath days", Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and many others were all sabbath days.

When referred to in plural and the context of the passage is the ceremonial law, then the sabbaths referred to can be nothing else but ceremonial sabbaths. Verse seventeen goes on to say, "Which are a shadow of things to come."

These sabbaths were called a shadow because Passover was a shadow of the crucifixion and Feast of Weeks was a shadow of Pentecost etc. These Old Testament holy day feasts were shadows of what was to come and once those things had come and gone then the shadows also disappeared. Here is one verse from Leviticus that refers to such feast holy days, which involves meat and drink, that is, meat and drink offerings that Paul also refers to in Colossians 2:16. Leviticus 23:37 "These are the feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day"

Some who would like us to believe it is only nine Commandments have claimed that the Sabbath of the Lord was a shadow as referred to in Colossians 2:17. Is this true? We have seen that this Hebrew sanctuary system had many feast days that were ceremonial sabbaths and these were all shadows of something. What was Passover a shadow of? Who became our Passover Lamb? On what day was Jesus crucified? What was about to be sacrificed in the temple when Jesus died and an unseen hand ripped the temple curtain from top to bottom? Jesus of course became our Passover

Lamb and died at the exact same time that they were about to sacrifice the Passover lamb in the temple. So was Passover a shadow of something? Most definitely! It was a shadow of the true Passover lamb dying on the cross for our sins. Since some are calling the Seventh day Sabbath a shadow, perhaps they would like to tell us what it was a shadow of. Happy hunting because the Sabbath is not a shadow of anything! All these feasts ended at the cross because they were practised because of sin and why they ended with the sacrifice of Jesus. They came about as a result of sin. So when was the Sabbath created?

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Most Christians do not know that the word translated "rested" in our English Bibles in Genesis 2:3 is actually "shabath" in the Hebrew and means Sabbath. God said the Sabbath "is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever..." Why did God say it was a sign? Because "...in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17 There can be no doubt that the Sabbath was made at creation and was before sin. This is just one of many reasons that it cannot be a ceremonial law as some have erroneously stated and cannot be a shadow of anything as it was instituted before sin and so can have nothing to do with the ordinances of the ceremonial law. The Lord's Sabbath has never been associated with sacrifices, and we are told that is a sign that it is God we love and worship and that it is God that sanctifies us and makes us Holy when we keep His day Holy. Genesis 2:2-3

Some will argue this sign and perpetual covenant that was to last forever was only made with Israel, but note that we are children of Israel from Abraham. Galatians 3:29 "And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." We are and have to be children of Israel as both covenants were only made with the house of Israel. Hebrews 8:10, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel...says the Lord: I will put My Laws into their mind and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." See also Romans 2:28-29, Romans 9:6-8, 1 Corinthians 10:18 and Galatians 6:16.

THE FINAL PROOF AND PERFECT PARALLEL THAT CAN LEAVE NO DOUBT

Note below the perfect parallel between Colossians 2:16 and Ezekiel 45:17 and that this was a sin offering, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel for breaking God's Moral law (Ten Commandments) as prescribed by the ceremonial law until such time that Jesus nailed this law to the cross. This is what Israel had to do to make atonement for sin, which is the breaking of the Ten Commandments which of course includes the fourth Commandment, the Seventh Day Sabbath. It clearly demonstrates the issue and leaves no doubt as to what Paul was explaining to the Colossians. A comparison is also given in table format for those who prefer that. Note first Strong's dictionary definition for holyday in Colossians 2:16 and that

festivals, feasts and holydays are synonymous. Parentheses are added.

G1859 heorte, Of uncertain affinity; a festival: - feast, holyday.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; [sin] 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink [offerings], or in respect of an holyday [feast], or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:" Colossians 2:14-16

"And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts [holyday], and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel." Ezekiel 45:17

Colossians 2:16	Ezekiel 45:17
meat, or in drink, [offerings]	meat offerings, and drink offerings.
KJV of an holyday, NKJV regarding a festival	In the feasts,
or of the new moon	and in the new moons,
or of the sabbath days:	and in the sabbaths,

The following verse also confirms that the ordinances were by the hand of Moses and are separate from the whole law despite those who would try and tell you that the Law of Moses and the Ten Commandments are the same thing.

"Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." 2 Chronicles 33:8

Sadly, there is no shortage of Christians that do not understand Colossians 2:16 or the other passages. They often call the Sabbath a shadow which we have seen is impossible, and some have gone to extreme lengths to even try and prove the "Sabbath Of The LORD" is a ceremonial law, which is what did have the shadows. The Fourth Commandment was never practised because of sin. The ceremonial law was written in a book and why it was also called the "Book of the Covenant." This is where God would have written it if it was for Israel only but God by no mistake of course wrote it in stone with the other nine Commandments. The "Law of Moses" (ceremonial law) is not the Ten Commandments as the Ten Commandments were not practised because of sin for it is entirely sin to break them.

Section Three

Revelation's Two Witnesses

The two witnesses are two of the most dramatic characters found in scripture and yet there are several different interpretations of who they are, and no one seems to be able to identify them with any certainty.

Scripture states that Revelation's two witnesses cannot be killed by man and that they can devour their enemies by fire coming from their mouths, (Revelation 11:5) they have the power to shut up the heavens from rain, power to turn any water to blood and send plagues upon the earth as often as they please. (Revelation 11:6) But when they have testified, the beast comes out of the bottomless pit and kills them. (Revelation 11:7) Scripture then informs us that their dead bodies will lie in the street for three and half days and will be seen by people from nations all over the earth. (Revelation 11:8-9)

This is certainly an intriguing chronicle of events that unfold and these two witnesses are said to have very unusual and miraculous abilities.

Many of the above points are focused on in an attempt to identify these two witnesses but most fail because they miss one very crucial point in understanding symbolic time periods in Bible prophecy.

Some believe they are Moses and Elijah because Elijah's prayer stopped rain and resulted in a drought in Israel for 3.5 years. (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1; James 5:17) Moses because of the ten plagues that came upon Egypt. Moses by the power of God turned water into blood. (Exodus 7:17) And not forgetting of course Elijah bringing down fire from heaven (2 Kings 1:10-14) in regards to the fire that comes from the mouths of the two witnesses. (Revelation 11:5)

Then you have Revelation 11:4 that says, "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks." When Zechariah asked the angel, "who are these two olive trees?" The angel replied that, "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." (Zechariah 4:11:14)

Elijah and Enoch are also identified as they were both miraculously taken by God. (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11; Hebrews 11:5) Then there is also the view that these are just two unknown people of God that are called by Him to be witnesses at the end of time.

So are Revelation's two witnesses literal people or could they be symbolic? The majority of the Book of Revelation can be found in the Old Testament and it certainly holds all the information we need to identify these two witnesses. But note also that the majority of Revelation is symbolic, and you will note that there is a lot of symbolism used in Revelation 11. The "beast" for instance is symbolic of a kingdom according to Daniel 7:17 and 7:23, and on close examination of this passage we find there is much more symbolism used.

And what about the three and a half days? All reputable theologians know and will tell you that when prophecy is symbolic that the day for a year rule applies. (See Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34) So is the time period symbolic in Revelation 11?

It is also very significant that 3.5 years is often represented as a time of trouble in scripture and that three and a half years is mentioned 7 times in Bible prophecy in different ways. For example: The two witnesses are said to prophesy, "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." That is of course also three and a half years as told in Revelation 11:9 that states "three days and an half."

This time period is one of the most significant time periods in history and is found in Revelation 11:2; 13:5 as "42 Months," which = 3.5 Years or 1260 Days, and in Revelation 11:3; 12:6 as "1260 Days," which = 3.5 Years or 42 Months, and also in Daniel 7:25; 12:7 and Revelation 12:14 as been written in slightly different ways as "time, and times, and half a time," which = Time = 1 Year, times = 2 Years and half a time = .5 Year = total 3.5 Years which = 42 Months or 1260 Days.

So what is this time period as it identifies the time that the two witnesses testify and hence is the best piece of evidence we have to their identity?

THE TWO WITNESSES OF REVELATION

Before getting into this intriguing and very misunderstood topic, here is an interesting fact to introduce the illuminating truth on Revelation's two witnesses.

The brightest man made light on earth emanates from the top of the Luxor hotel, which is a giant pyramid structure found in Las Vegas, Nevada. There are a total of 45 xenon lights, with each one being as big as a washing machine and using the brightest bulb available, which shoots a powerful blast of radiant light straight up into space. This light that beams from the top of this artificial mountain is so bright that astronauts can see it flying overhead. Airline pilots are warned to avoid the area, as the beam of light can blind them temporarily if they were to fly through it. Sadly, this brightest man made light on earth is totally wasted as it is not illuminating anything as it blazes into the heavens above.

Did you know there is a story in the Word of God that tells of a mountaintop blazing with heavenly light? Even though it is very seldom addressed, this event called the

Mount of Transfiguration, or sometimes the Glorious Mount, is one of the most pivotal moments found in the New Testament. This monumental experience found in the Gospels of Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-10 and Luke 9:28-36 is full of profound meaning for Christians, and it helps illuminate many other amazing Bible truths including the very misunderstood truth on Revelation's two witnesses.

ASCENDING TO THE LIGHT

After a long day of teaching and ministering to the multitudes, Jesus and His disciples separate from the clamouring crowds. Jesus then says something quite unusual: "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." Mark 9:1. It probably seemed to His disciples that Jesus was predicting something incredibly big. But what? Then six days after Jesus makes this cryptic announcement, they reach the foot of a "high mountain." There Jesus handpicks His own trusted apostles; Peter, James and John and with them in tow, He leaves the others in the valley and begins the long ascent up the steep hill. As the sun is setting, they finally stumble wearily onto the summit. Jesus then immediately kneels and begins to pray, and at first the disciples attempt to join him; yet exhausted, they soon drift into a deep sleep.

Then something really extraordinary happens! Combining the testimony of the synoptic Gospels Luke and Mark, we are told, "As He prayed, He was transformed before them. The appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. Exceeding white, like snow such as no launderer on earth can whiten them." (See the full account in Luke 9:28-36 and Mark 9:2-10.)

WHO ARE REVELATION'S TWO WITNESSES?

You can begin to see why many may think that Revelation's two witnesses are Moses and Elijah. But are they right or is there symbolism involved here? Suddenly awakened by this cosmic event, the disciples see Jesus Christ shining with a heavenly light radiating from within. He is not just the humble son of Joseph and Mary, but with unveiled glory, Jesus Christ now appears as the majestic Creator of the universe.

In His prayer, "He pleads that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony, with the knowledge that He is ... the Son of God and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption."

Our loving heavenly Father grants them this brief glimpse of His Son's glory, because He knows the disciples were soon to see their Master be completely humiliated. Their teacher was about to be stripped, beaten and bleeding; appearing very helpless and very mortal. So in the same way that a little tree stores sap during the warm, bright spring to sustain it during the cold, dark winter, Jesus knows the faith of His disciples needed a bright boost on the mountain to see them through the approaching dark day on Calvary.

The disciples also needed the reassurance of this event because they continued to confuse the purpose of the Messiah's mission with the popular Jewish fables of earthly glory. Jesus knew it was going to be devastating for them to see their hopes for earthly glory punctured by those ghastly Roman nails, so their heavenly Father granted them this vision to remind them that Jesus Christ's kingdom was heavenly and not earthly.

ARE MOSES AND ELIJAH REVELATION'S TWO WITNESSES?

Along with the glorious light of heaven, the brightest ever seen on earth, two of the greatest celebrities of Scripture appeared at the side of Christ. "And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus." Mark 9:4.

Someone might ask, why these two individuals? God had also taken Enoch to heaven, so why was he not along for this special visit? Put very simply, the two prominent individuals who did come were living symbols of the Word of God. Moses represents the Law, and Elijah represents the Prophets. Jesus says in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to [fulfil]." Moses was the great lawgiver, and Elijah was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets.

One can see why some conclude that Moses and Elijah are Revelation's two witnesses. However, throughout the Bible we find the Word of God is often portrayed with a dual image. The Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone. The Word of God is also portrayed as a sword with two edges. Two lamps and two olive trees portray the two sacred divisions of the Bible. But the ultimate testimony of God's Word is Jesus: "In the volume of the book it is written of me." Hebrews 10:7. The volume of the Book, the Bible, all points to Jesus who is the combination of two natures, the human and the divine. Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

In Luke 16:31, Jesus concludes His parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Here Jesus places a very high priority on God's Word, and we should not miss it. No matter what miracles you witness, even someone rising from the dead, you should still place the plain Word of God on higher ground.

THE ULTIMATE ENDORSEMENT

When it comes to election time, politicians begin to campaign and jostle for the support of voters. One common way for them to achieve this is by getting endorsements from as many popular and credible leaders as possible. The Glorious Mount experience is the ultimate endorsement.

Ever since the time of Abraham, every Jew has been looking for the coming Messiah. Several counterfeit Christ's had appeared on the landscape of Hebrew history. Now as a symbol of supreme support, Jesus Christ stands glorified flanked on the right

and left by the two greatest heroes of ancient Israel. Moses and Elijah surround Jesus Christ to give us a very vivid picture that the Word of God points to and endorses Jesus as the Messiah.

This endorsement from Moses and Elijah who symbolize Revelation's two witnesses represent the endorsement of the law and the prophets, God's Word, that Jesus is the "coming one." Matthew 11:3. No other individuals could have offered greater validation for Jesus Christ's ministry than these two giants of Scripture.

The transfiguration is also a direct fulfilment of prophecy. Malachi foretold, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord." One reason the Word of God is so wonderful is because it is so precise. Both Moses and Elijah did appear in the New Testament prior to the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour to encourage and endorse Him.

TWO OR THREE WITNESSES

In Revelation 11:3-12, we find the great prophecy of the two witnesses of Revelation. "These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." Revelation 11:4. We know that a lamp is a symbol for the Word of God, "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." Psalms 119:105. When Zechariah sees these two olive trees in vision, he asks the angel what they represent. "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord." Zechariah 4:6. It also takes the olive oil of the Spirit to illuminate the lamp of God's Word. These lampstands have seven pipes, which is information not recorded in Revelation 11. Zechariah 4:2 "...And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof." See also Numbers 8:2, Exodus 25:37 and Revelation 4:5.

Revelation warns what will happen to those who would harm God's two witnesses, the Holy Bible. "If anyone wants to hurt them fire proceeds out of their mouths and devours their enemies." This happened in the experiences of both Moses and Elijah. Fire came down from heaven on the Egyptians as they pursued God's children and it consumed the sons of Aaron. It also consumed the soldiers when they challenged Elijah. In addition, "These have the power to shut up heaven so no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over water to turn them to blood." Did Elijah pray and the rain stop? Did Moses pray and the water turn to blood? So again we see why God likens the two witnesses, His Word, to the ministry of Moses and Elijah.

As if the endorsement of Moses and Elijah was not enough, a cloud overshadows the mountaintop and the voice of the Almighty God is heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, Hear Him." The Bible says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every

word be established." 2 Corinthians 13:1. On the Mount, two people redeemed by Christ testify that Jesus is the Messiah, and of course, the third is the voice of God Himself! And what better confirmation of truth could God have offered; the lawgiver and the greatest prophet and His own audible testimony? In effect we have Moses saying, "This is the One." And Elijah saying, "This is the One." Then God Almighty saying, "This is the One."

DIVINE DISCUSSION

After first reading this passage, I wondered, "How did they know it was Moses and Elijah?" They had no archived video footage or journalistic photographs with which to compare these beings. Then I realized they had probably overheard some of the conversation and heard Jesus address them by name.

Fortunately, the Gospel of Luke actually gives us a little more insight regarding what these great men discussed. It says, "Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." Luke 9:30, 31 NKJV. Of course, "decease" refers to His sacrifice on Mount Calvary.

One could not imagine any other two individuals who would be better qualified to encourage Jesus to go forward with His sacrifice. Both Moses and Elijah understood rejection by their own people and the sting of persecution. Keep in mind that both Moses and Elijah had been in heaven for hundreds of years, not because of their good works, but because they were enjoying what one could call an advance payment on the sacrifice that Jesus was about to make at calvary. In other words, if Jesus did not proceed with the plan to die for mankind, then Moses and Elijah had no right to remain in heaven. They were no doubt very motivated to encourage and inspire Jesus Christ to go forward. Ultimately, their purpose was to be witnesses to Christ and to support Jesus in His coming trial and sacrifice.

THREE TABERNACLES

As the eyes of the disciples adjusted to the light and they collected their wits, I imagine the first thing they did was to remove their shoes as they realized they were on holy ground. After a few terrified minutes of eavesdropping on this divine dialogue, we find Peter feels compelled to say something. "And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Mark 9:5.

It is interesting that Bible history records three earthly temples: one in the wilderness during the time of Moses; Solomon's temple standing during the time of Elijah; and the third temple built after the Babylonian captivity. This third one is the one Jesus cleansed. There are also three aspects or stages of salvation being justification, which is symbolized by Moses; sanctification, the ministry of Elijah; and the God filled man or glorification represented by Jesus.

MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCE

We find that many of the high points in the Bible are also mountaintop experiences. The Lord often arranged profound events on mountaintops because they make natural monuments. Whenever God's children looked upon these prominent mountain peaks, they would remember the important events of their sacred history.

For example, consider that after 40 years in the wilderness, God delivered His covenant to Moses on a mountaintop. Mount Sinai had the fire of God with smoke and thunder shaking the summit. After 40 days in the wilderness, God also spoke to Elijah on Mount Sinai with fire, wind and an earthquake (1 Kings 19:11-12). After 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus rebuked the devil on a high mountain (Matthew 4:8-10). God also makes His promises on mountains. It was in the mountains of Ararat that God made His covenant with Noah and on Mount Moriah He made His covenant with Abraham. The whole nation of Jews confirmed the Promised Land covenant from Mount Gerizim (Joshua 8:33). And of course, Elijah was on Mount Carmel when fire and rain came down, which was a symbol of God's reviving Spirit raining on the Church. Moses first glimpsed the Promised Land from Mount Nebo and it is from a high mountain John first sees the holy city (Revelation 21:10). And most importantly, God's loving covenant of salvation was sealed on Mount Calvary.

Like Jesus, Moses stood on a mountain with stretched out hands, supported on the right and the left by Aaron and Hur (Exodus 17:12). When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, two thieves surrounded Him on the right and the left representing two kinds of sinners, the same way you have Moses and Elijah flanking Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. I would say that before we climb the Glorious Mount, we really need to climb Mount Calvary. God wants to confirm a covenant with you and fill you with His Spirit, and it will happen when you humble yourself upon the mountain where Jesus was slain.

THE FINAL WORD

The Glorious Mount rings with divine authority. Mark 9:7 says, "And a cloud came and overshadowed them." (NKJV). This cloud is actually veiling the glory of the Father, who declares, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him." God the Father comes to sanction His Son who receives His total approval.

This is very important for us to understand. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, God the Father speaks personally at Christ's baptism in the low Jordan valley, and identifies Jesus as His Son. He says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," announcing that the Jewish nation no longer needs to look for anyone else as the Messiah (Matthew 3:17 NKJV). Anyone who came before Him was a fraud, and anyone else coming after is a counterfeit. Jesus is the one!

Then again at the end of Jesus Christ's ministry, God the Father again identifies His divine Son on the mountain peak, commanding something very simple. "Hear Him."

That is a complete sentence, easy to understand. But “hear” means more than just hearing the audible sounds. It very much means “listening with undivided attention and doing.” Jesus says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Church.” Revelation 2:1. Our Almighty Creator God, in person, is commanding you and I to listen to Jesus’ word and to do it.

There have been many counterfeits, frauds, impostors and cult leaders trying to impersonate Jesus Christ. But God the Father says about Jesus in the Bible, “Hear Him.” He is the true Word! That’s something very powerful to contemplate.

SUDDENLY

As the final echoes of God’s thundering voice resonate from the mountaintop, the trembling disciples cower in fear. Mark 9:8 says, “Suddenly” it all ended. Just as quickly as the light flashed on, it went off. “When they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.” As the glory evaporates and their eyes adjust to the darkness, those who symbolize Revelation’s two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, and the Father and the cloud are all gone; all they can see is Jesus. He promised, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5.

It is easy to have our vision obscured by the kaleidoscope of images that we see in the Bible. And it is also easy to have our minds clouded with the collage of images we see in modern life. But after this all fades, and we are at the base of the mountain again, what really matters I think is God is telling us to only hear Jesus, to only see Jesus. He was the only one left with them; everyone else might forsake you, but Jesus says, “I will be with you till the end.” Matthew 28:20. Remember that Jesus our Lord and Saviour is still there for you even after the glory disappears.

DON'T MENTION IT

Jesus Christ again says something else very unusual to the dazed disciples. You and I can barely imagine how these three apostles are feeling “as they came down the mountain.” Mark 9:9. That incredible mountaintop event must have been life changing, and they were probably in spiritual shock, even more so than when Christ calmed the storm or walked on water. They might have even been glowing with the lingering residue of light still dissipating from their faces, like Moses face was glowing after speaking with God. What doubts about Jesus could they possibly have now? They were probably ready to die for their Lord and Saviour that very moment.

But then Jesus commands them not to tell anyone of the things they had seen. I would imagine that would have been one of the most difficult mandates they ever received from their Lord. They had just witnessed a glimpse of heaven. They had seen Moses, and they had seen Elijah. Like ancient Israel, they had heard the commanding voice of God reverberating from a mountain, and now they are told not to make any comments regarding this remarkable event. Do not mention it they are told. Keep in mind that Jesus is asking three fishermen not to comment on the most

exciting experience of their lives. I do not know if I could have remained silent on this one.

TIMING TO TELL

It is fortunate that they were not asked to “never mention it.” More precisely, Jesus asked, “That they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead.” Mark 9:9.

Why would Jesus make this request knowing that their hearts had been so profoundly touched through this magnificent event? I believe Jesus wanted them to store this experience in reserve for when they would really need it. Peter, James and John were chosen to be the leaders of the early Church, and when all seemed lost, and when things got hard, they could say, “Don’t be discouraged. We want to tell you about something we saw that night with Jesus on the mountain.” But sadly, it appears just when they needed it the most, they did not remember this mountaintop experience; when their Lord went to the cross of Calvary, they forgot who He was.

Has God given you a mountaintop experience? Maybe God has answered prayers and worked miracles that right when they are happening, you say, “Wow, praise the Lord!” But then after the glory fades, you end up in a valley with the evil one crowding you. And the memory of what has happened on the mountaintop has all but evaporated. 

It’s just like when God had told the children of Israel not to make idols, and they heard the voice of God, and they felt the ground shake, and they saw fire consume a mountain. They glibly promised the Lord they would obey. Yet a few days later, they’re worshiping a golden calf.

Our adversary the devil is a master at inducing mountaintop amnesia. If you give him just five minutes of your attention, he can make you forget a whole lifetime of miracles. If you entertain his suggestions and you embrace his discouragement and his doubts, all those mountaintop memories can dissipate just when you need them the most.

LAST DAY SIGNIFICANCE

The experience on the Glorious Mount is especially important for the end times; that’s why after His resurrection, Jesus returned to teach on this. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets [here are Moses and Elijah again!], he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:27.

Revelation 12:17 says, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The woman represents the Church, and the dragon, the devil, wants to destroy her. The Church in the last days has two outstanding characteristics: They “keep the commandments of God, and they have

the testimony of Jesus.” What is the testimony of Jesus? Revelation 19:10 explains, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” So the members of the last day Church are identified as a people who will keep the law and have the prophets (the spirit of prophecy).

Isaiah 8:16 states, “Bind up the testimony, seal the Law among My disciples.” Moses, before he died, exhorted the children of Israel to keep the law. He repeats the Ten Commandments to them in Deuteronomy chapter 5 and says, “These words that I have spoken unto you this day shall be in your heart. You shall bind them upon your hand. They shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” So the law and the words of the prophets are sealed by the Holy Spirit in the mind and hearts of God’s people. “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30.

We must saturate ourselves with the law and the prophets, with the Word of God, for a very special purpose in these last days. Mark 9 says, “His clothing became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.” (NKJV). Mark is really struggling here for words to describe the bright aura of light the disciples saw around this heavenly assembly. The garments of Jesus Christ were radiant white, just like new snow, and glowing like the sun. Of course, the robe that Jesus wore is a symbol of His purity. It is what Jesus is wearing in heaven. Wonderfully, you and I are offered this same clothing purified by His blood, if we stay true to His Word. “These ... washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Revelation 7:14. “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love.” 1 Peter 1:22 NKJV.

THE 1260 YEARS AND REVELATION'S TWO WITNESSES

The most significant time period in Bible Prophecy is called the dark ages where God’s true Church was persecuted for 1260 years. An understanding of this very significant time period sheds a lot of light on revealing truth and error on what the two witnesses of Revelation are and are not. During this time an estimated 50-150 million Christians were murdered and tortured wrongly as heretics. The vast majority of historians agree that this period is from 538AD to 1798AD which = 1260 years. During this time period, God’s hand was upon the Church preserving it from total extinction. When Bible prophecy is symbolic in nature, the well known day for a year principle is applied and so 1260 days = 1260 years. This truly is an extremely significant time period as one can observe from the verses below that actually all refer to the same period of time. Note each of these scriptures carefully and note that Revelation 11:2 and Revelation 11:3 are referring to the time period of Revelation’s two witnesses. See also who is the antichrist of Revelation.

42 Months = 3.5 Years or 1260 Days (Jewish calendar = 360 days, Lunar month = 30 days)

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Revelation 11:2 (two witnesses passage)

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Revelation 13:5

1260 Days = 3.5 Years or 42 Months

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." Revelation 11:3 (two witnesses passage)

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Revelation 12:6

Time = 1 Year, times = 2 Years and half a time = .5 Year = total 3.5 Years which = 42 Months or 1260 Days

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Daniel 7:25

"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." Daniel 12:7

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Revelation 12:14

MOSES AND ELIJAH CANNOT BE REVELATION'S TWO WITNESSES

Now that we are familiar with this time period, it's important to look at this one crucial issue that's causing so much confusion. Revelation's two witnesses are symbolized by Moses & Elijah. In Revelation 11, we read about the two witnesses of Revelation. "And I'll give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." Please note this does not say these witnesses will only prophesy for 1,260 days, for witnesses for God witness all the time. This as we have just seen refers to the Dark Ages from AD 538 to 1798, when the Law and the Prophets, the Bible, was obscured. Do not forget that this time period is actually 1260 years and in fact has already occurred.

There are many good Christians out there who believe that in the last days Moses and Elijah will literally come down to the earth again to preach, only to be killed and lay in the streets for three and a half days. It's a half truth because Revelation's two witnesses, the Word, is symbolized by Moses and Elijah. But these two men of God are in heaven with their glorified bodies and the Bible does not tell us that He wants two others to step down from heaven to be killed. Moses and Elijah will not be coming back to earth in this way and do not forget that this time period ended in AD 1798 and so CANNOT be a future event.

A TYPE OF THE SECOND COMING

To make a full circle, let's go back a brief moment to where we began. One of the most important lessons from the Mount of Transfiguration is that it represents a miniature picture of the glorious second coming of Jesus.

Referring back to this experience, Peter identifies the event as a sample of Jesus' coming. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 2 Peter 1:16-17.

Remember that Jesus stated that some of His disciples would not experience death before they saw the kingdom of God coming with power. We know of course that these disciples died long ago but they were given an advance peek of what it will be like when Jesus Christ returns.

A number of exciting insights can be gleaned from this remarkable story. Consider the parallels:

There will be two categories of saints when Jesus returns: the resurrected and the living. Moses, who died and was resurrected (Jude 1:9), is a symbol of the large class of people who will awake from their dusty graves when the Lord calls them "The dead in Christ shall rise." Elijah represents the other class of people who will be alive when Jesus returns. Like Elijah who was caught up into heaven by a fiery chariot and Enoch who walked with God until he walked right into heaven, they will be translated with new, glorious bodies without ever tasting death.

During the transfiguration, Jesus, Moses and Elijah are wearing white garments, the same kind that the redeemed will wear. Clouds of glory also accompany them; Jesus Christ left in the clouds and said He would come back in the clouds. And even the voice of our Father in heaven was heard on the Glorious Mount, just as it will be when Jesus Christ returns on the right hand of the Father (Matthew 26:64).

There might even be some significance to the fact that this all happens six days after

Jesus makes the promise. After Christ told the disciples they would see His kingdom come, He tarried six days before He took them up the mountain. I believe this yields some very fascinating and relevant truths.

SIX PLUS ONE: A BIBLE THEME

The story of the transfiguration is not the only story in the Bible in which a six day period is invoked. For instance, in Job 5:19, "He will deliver you in six troubles, yes in seven no evil will touch you." In addition, Athaliah reigned for six years before Josiah was coroneted. When Josiah came forth from the temple, Athaliah was slain and he was crowned; the trumpets even blew, and afterward the Sabbath began.

Hebrew servants were released after six years of servitude. They also sowed the fields for six years and left the land desolate on the seventh. Likewise, the earth will be desolate for a thousand years, a time when the gospel will not be sown. Jesus says, "I am the Sower. The Gospel is the seed." When He comes in Revelation, it is with a sickle to harvest.

But most interesting is when Moses stayed at the base of Mount Sinai. We all know that he stayed on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights, like the flood. But the time before that, Exodus 24 says, "For six days he stayed at the base of the mountain." After that, God called him up to the top to receive the Commandments. This is just like what happened on the Glorious Mount. After six days, Jesus went up the mountain, and Moses met Him there.

The Bible always fits together perfectly! It is just like a puzzle. It's significant that it says, "after six days." That tells me that if this is a miniature picture of the second coming of Christ, we are very near the return of the Lord.

THE TRANQUILIZED CHURCH

It is prudent to keep in mind that the Glorious Mount happened very unexpectedly. The atmosphere surrounding the mountain was quiet and dark and the drowsy disciples were snoozing. Then, BANG! It happened. Jesus Christ will come as a thief in the night, when many of His followers are unprepared.

There is a clear sober warning for us in this whole experience. At the most pivotal moments of Church history, Satan seems to sedate the saints. Just before this revelation of glory, the Scriptures declare the disciples "were heavy with sleep." Luke 9:32. When Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane, the Bible tells us that He picked the same three disciples to pray with Him. And they again went to sleep. Likewise, in the parable of the 10 virgins, Jesus warns us just prior to the second coming that "they all slumbered and slept." Matthew 25:5. It seems at the most critical moments in Jesus Christ's ministry, the saints are snoring soundly. This is why Jesus warns, "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming; in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the

morning lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.” Mark 13:35-36 NKJV.

When they should have been kneeling with Him in the garden, remembering the glory they witnessed, they fell asleep. And because Peter, James and John were asleep on the Mount of Transfiguration, they lost the full potential of the whole experience. They forgot the Glorious Mount, so they were not ready to follow Jesus Christ to Mount Calvary. I wonder if that haunted them for the rest of their lives: that missed opportunity because they were sleeping when they should have been praying.

A MORE SURE WORD

So how do we stay awake? To the powerful weapon of prayer, we can add the witness of Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets. Revelation's two witnesses, God's Word, can prepare you for anything. In 2 Peter 1:17, Peter refers back to the Glorious Mount. It is the only time that any of the three disciples write about it. But before Peter's death, he writes passionately, "For [Jesus] received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to Him from the Excellent Glory, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which came from Heaven we heard when we were with Him on the holy mount." Verses 17-18 NKJV.

Yet even after Peter reflects on that defining moment in his life, he adds, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto to ye do well that ye take heed." Verse 19. Can you imagine saying that after seeing Jesus Christ in all His glory sandwiched between the two greatest Old Testament characters, with the voice of God the Father seared forever into your memory? Yet Peter confesses that however great that experience was, he had something more important, more dependable. God's Word is a light that "grows brighter and brighter until the day dawn."

Peter saw Jesus Christ glorified; he received a glimpse of heaven. But you and I have something worth more. We have the Bible. Christ tells us through Peter that your Bible is more trustworthy than a vision. If you want a mountaintop experience, you have it within your reach if you reach for your Bible. Nothing is more important than the testimony of Moses and Elijah, the double edged sword, the Law and the Prophets, the Commandments of God, the testimony of Jesus; it is the most precious thing God has committed to us mortals. It is Jesus Christ, the Word who became flesh.

GLOWING FOR GOD

As a child, I was always fascinated by those pale green illuminating plastic toys you could hold up to a light and watch glow even after the light was turned off. I remember one of those toys was a glow in the dark plastic sword. After exposing it to the light, I could find my way through the dark house just by the glow from my toy sword.

The importance on the message of Revelation's two witnesses should now be clear.

Jesus Christ our Lord has given us a special warning message in the Mount of Transfiguration. There are some very troubling days ahead, and now we must spend time on the mountain gathering light from God's Word to see us through the dark valleys. The message from the mountain tells us that Jesus is the One, and that we too can wear the same robes Jesus, Elijah and Moses wore that day. He's telling us to listen to the testimony of Jesus, and to the laws and the prophets, which point to the fulfilment through Jesus Christ. It's a picture of Jesus' imminent second coming, and a warning not to become spiritually sleepy. This mountaintop experience helps to remind us that even when the glory fades, Jesus Christ is always still with us and that Jesus is our only way to heaven.

Seven individuals appeared on the mountain that day: Three from heaven; Moses, Elijah and God the Father; Three from earth; Peter, James and John. And then there was Jesus the bridge, the ladder between heaven and earth.



Section Four

What Happens When we die

Many are always seeking answers on death like what happens when you die? Do some soar to heaven while others descend to hell? Is there a holding place called "purgatory"? Do we enter the spirit world? What about reincarnation? Might I return as an eagle? Can the living actually communicate with dead and do the dead haunt the house they used to live in? The truth about death can be found only in the Bible. The book of Revelation says, "Satan deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9), thus we cannot expect the majority of human beings to be right about anything!

The purpose of this study is to prove these seven simple facts:

1. Man is made from the dust of the earth and becomes a living soul with the breath of life from God which is the spirit.
2. Fallen man is "mortal."
3. Fallen man does not have an "immortal soul."
4. It is not possible to communicate with the dead.
5. Death is a painless, unconscious sleep. (No awareness of time.)
6. Jesus Christ died, was buried, and then rose from the dead.
7. Jesus Christ will resurrect believers at His Second Coming.

WHAT IS THE SPIRIT AND SOUL?

The Spirit and Soul is something that is very misunderstood by many so Body + Spirit = Soul we will primarily let the Strong's dictionary followed by the Bible define what they are. Put simply, the Spirit is basically the BREATH of life from God. Both the Greek and Hebrew words translate "spirit" to "breath" or "air." The Greek word "pneuma" is known by many of you in relation to things like pneumatic tools which are air driven or pneumatic tyres which means tyres inflated by air. As you can see, the word "pneumatic" originated from the Greek word "Pneuma" and means "breath" or "air."

STRONG'S OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW DICTIONARY DEFINITION FOR SPIRIT.

H7307 ruach, Pronounced roo'-akh. From H7306; wind; by resemblance breath, that is,

a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions): - air, anger, blast, breath, X cool, courage, mind, X quarter, X side, spirit ([l-ual]), tempest, X vain, ([whirl-l]) wind (-y).

STRONG'S NEW TESTAMENT GREEK DICTIONARY DEFINITION FOR SPIRIT.

G4151 pneuma, Pronounced pnyoo'-mah. From G4154; a current of air, that is, breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively a spirit, that is, (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, daemon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy spirit: - ghost, life, spirit (-ual, -ually), mind. Compare G5590.

A person's soul is just simply a living breathing creature. Have you heard the expression; I went to the park and there wasn't a soul there? A soul just simply means a person and is who and what you are.

STRONG'S OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW DICTIONARY DEFINITION FOR SOUL.

H5315 nephesh, Pronounced neh'-fesh. From H5314; properly a breathing creature, that is, animal or (abstractly) vitality; used very widely in a literal, accommodated or figurative sense (bodily or mental).

IN THE BEGINNING

Genesis 2:7 God formed Adam into "a living soul."

Genesis 2:16-17 God warned that if Adam sinned, he would "surely die."

Genesis 3:4 The serpent said, "you will not surely die."

Genesis 3:19 Because of sin, man will return to dust.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Death is creation of a living soul in reverse. We return to dust "and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Job 27:3 The spirit of God does not live in our nose! This is referring to the breath of life from God.

Genesis 3:22-24 God did not want Adam and Eve after sin to take from "the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." So He drove them out of Paradise. Therefore no sinner will naturally "live forever" apart from Jesus Christ.

Genesis 5:5 After Adam lived 930 years, then "he died."

THE SOUL IS NOT IMMORTAL

Job 4:17 The Bible calls man mortal.

Revelation 16:3 "Every living soul died in the sea." Souls can die.

Ezekiel 18:4 God said, "The soul that sins, it shall die." Again, the soul can die!

Exodus 1:5 "Seventy souls" went to Egypt. Souls are people.

Acts 2:41 "Three thousand souls" were baptized. Again, souls are people.

1 Peter 3:20 "Eight souls were saved" in Noah's day. Again, souls are people.

1 Timothy 6:16 God "only has immortality." Man is not immortal.

2 Timothy 1:10 "Immortality" comes only "through the gospel."

Romans 2:7 Christians "seek for immortality."

1 Corinthians 15:53 At the end, "this mortal" shall "put on immortality."

DEATH IS A SLEEP

Job 14:12 The dead "shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep" until "the heavens be no more."

Psalms 13:3 "Lest I sleep the sleep of death."

Daniel 12:2 "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake."

Acts 7:60 When Stephen died, "he fell asleep."

John 11:11-14 "Lazarus sleeps ... Jesus spoke of his death."

1 Corinthians 11:30; 15:6, 18, 51 Paul said death was "sleep."

1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 Those "which sleep in Jesus" will be resurrected.

DO THE DEAD HAUNT THEIR HOUSE?

Job 7:10 The dead "shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

THE DEAD ARE UNCONSCIOUS

Psalms 115:17 "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."

Psalms 146:4 When a man dies, "in that very day his thoughts perish."

Ecclesiastes 9:5 "The dead know not anything."

Ecclesiastes 9:10 "There is no work... nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave."

JESUS CHRIST TAUGHT THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Matthew 22:23, 29 Jesus rebuked those who said there was "no resurrection."

Matthew 22:31 Jesus taught "the resurrection of the dead."

Luke 14:14 The saints will "be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

John 5:28-29 "All who are in their graves" will be resurrected at the second coming of Christ.

John 6:39, 40, 44, 54 All believers will rise "on the last day."

John 11:24 Martha said to Jesus, "I know that he [Lazarus] shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Matthew 16:21 Jesus would "be killed, and be raised again on the third day."

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 "Christ died ... was buried ... he rose again."

Matthew 28:7 The angel said, "he is risen from the dead."

Revelation 1:18 Jesus "was dead," but is now "alive for evermore."

Revelation 2:8 Jesus "was dead, and is alive."

DEATH AND RESURRECTION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts 2:29 David is "dead and buried." His body is still in the tomb.

Jesus raising the dead Acts 2:34 David has not yet "ascended into the heavens." He's

not in heaven yet.

Acts 9:36-41 Tabitha "was sick, and died ... Peter ... prayed; and turning to the body said ... arise ... she opened her eyes ... presented her alive."

Acts 13:36 David "fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers and saw corruption."

Acts 24:15 "A resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."

ALL BELIEVERS WILL BE RESURRECTED WHEN JESUS CHRIST RETURNS

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 "The Lord himself shall descend ... the dead ... shall rise ... to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

1 Corinthians 15:50-55 The saints cry out, "O death, where is thy sting" when they are resurrected at the second coming of Jesus.

John 14:1-3 Jesus will take us to heaven when He "comes again."

1 Corinthians 15:12-23 Paul says there is a resurrection of both Christ and the dead, "but every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

WE MUST BEWARE OF SATANIC DECEPTIONS

Matthew 24:4 "Take heed that no man deceive you."

2 Corinthians 11:14 Satan deceives as "an angel of light."

1 Timothy 4:1 We must beware of "doctrines of devils."

Genesis 3:4 The first doctrine the devil taught Eve was that if she sinned she would "not surely die"!

2 Corinthians 11:3 As "the serpent beguiled Eve," so Satan continues to mislead even good people "through his subtlety."

Matthew 24:24 All can be deceived by the "great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

Behold, the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice, and come forth, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. ~~Jesus Christ (John 5:28-29)

So far it has been proven from the Bible that when a man dies, he is dead, asleep and unconscious in the grave until the resurrection when Jesus Christ comes again. Some will say, if this is true, then how do we explain other verses in the Word of God that seem to teach that either people or their souls go directly to heaven when they die? The following passages are often used to teach an "immediate flight to glory", whereas, upon closer analysis, they really do not. Read them all carefully, and then don't forget what Jesus and the rest of the Bible says.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS - LUKE 23:42-43

When Jesus was dying on the cross the crucified thief right next to Him said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." First of all, the thief's question looked forward to the Second Coming, not the Jesus and the thief on the

Crossmoment of death. The interpretation of Jesus' response depends upon where you place a tiny particle called a "comma." The fact is, commas are not inspired, but were added over a thousand years later along with chapters and verses. Did Jesus Christ say, "I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise" or, "I say to you today, you will be with Me in paradise" (at the Second Coming)? Here is one translation that put the comma in the place that lines up with all other scripture.

Luke 23:43 TS98 "And Jesus said to him, 'Truly, I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise.'"

Here is further proof that punctuation is not inspired. Acts 19:12 KJV "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." In this verse we see the diseases departed from the sick handkerchiefs or aprons. The comma should have been placed after the word "sick". There are many such examples through even the King James Bible as well as other translations.

Let's look at just one more that proves beyond all doubt that punctuation is not inspired by God. This following example involves chapters, verses as well as a comma. Matthew 28:1 reads, "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."

The end of the Sabbath which is sunset and dawn are twelve hours apart, so why the apparent contradiction in the above verse? The answer is found in the translation of this passage. By reorganizing the last verse of Matthew 27 and the first verse of Matthew 28, the apparent ambiguity completely disappears. See Matthew 27:62-66. In Matthew 27:62, a request for a guard on the tomb was made on the Sabbath (the day after the preparation) and that the request was for a guard until the third day. By simply moving the text "in the end of the Sabbath," from the beginning of Matthew 28:1 to the end of Matthew 27:66, which is where it should have been placed when punctuation and chapters and verse were added, we would have the following.

Matthew 27:66 "So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch in the end of the sabbath."

Matthew 28:1 "As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."

It was the watch guarding the tomb that began at the end of the Sabbath. Since Jesus was to rise the third day, the Roman guards were put in place immediately at the end of the Sabbath because they anticipated that the body of Jesus would be stolen by the Jews sometime on Sunday.

FOUR REASONS WHY THE COMMA IS WRONGLY PLACED IN LUKE 23:43

1. Jesus did not go to Paradise that day. He went to the tomb.
2. Crucifixion is very cruel and it normally takes several days to die and so the thief did not die that day which is why they broke his legs. John 19:31-33 NIV "Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs."
3. Right after His resurrection on Sunday morning, Jesus said to Mary, "I have not yet ascended to My Father." John 20:17. Thus on Sunday, Jesus had not yet ascended to Paradise. "Paradise" is in heaven where God and "the tree of life" are. Revelation 2:7 "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Revelation 22:1-2 "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."
4. Jesus would not contradict Himself or the rest of the Bible. He said previously that believers go to Heaven "on the last day" when He "comes again." John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 14:1-3.

WHAT ABOUT MOSES AND ELIJAH? LUKE 9:27-36

On the mount of transfiguration, "two men ... Moses and Elias ... appeared in glory." These were not spirits or disembodied souls, but "two men." Elijah never died. He was translated without seeing death. 2 Kings 2:11. Moses "died" and was "buried." Deuteronomy 34:5-6. Yet the book of Jude reveals that Michael came from heaven and, "contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses." Jude 1:9. Moses was also raised, that's why the devil protested. Then Michael said, "the Lord rebuke thee." Hence it was a living, resurrected Moses and a living, translated Elijah that appeared on the mount. Immediately prior to this appearance, Jesus told his disciples that they would soon "see the kingdom of God." Luke 9:27. On the mount they saw God's kingdom in miniature. Jesus was there, so was Moses (representing all resurrected saints), and Elijah (representing all translated saints at the Second

Coming). Both groups are described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

ABSENT FROM THE BODY, PRESENT WITH THE LORD

Paul longed “to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:8. The question is, would this transition take place at the moment of death, or at the Second Coming? Paul clarified in verse 4 that it would occur when “mortality” is “swallowed up by life” (verse 4). When is this? In his previous letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that “mortality” would be “swallowed up” when the resurrection of believers occurs at the end of the world. “In a moment ... at the last trump ... the dead shall be raised ... this mortal must put on immortality ... then ... Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:50-55. Thus Paul expected “to be present with the Lord” at the Second Coming. He later wrote, “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ... the dead in Christ shall rise ... so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Jesus said we will be with Him when He “comes again.” John 14:1-3. Because death is like sleep, it will seem like barely a moment until we are “present with the Lord.”

SOULS UNDER THE ALTAR - REVELATION 6:9-11

During the “fifth seal,” John “saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood.” This scene is symbolic, representing the martyrs who died for their steadfast faith in Jesus Christ. God said to Cain after he murdered his brother Abel, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries unto me from the ground.” Genesis 4:10. These words parallel what John saw in Revelation 6. The blood of Abel did not literally cry out from the ground. Neither are there actual souls underneath a real altar in heaven. The “souls under the altar” scene occurs right after “the fourth seal” scene. There “Hell” is seen following “a pale horse” ridden by “Death.” Revelation 6:7-8. Again, this is obviously symbolic and refers to those martyred for their faith and whose deaths cry out to God for just retribution. Those slain are represented as being told to “wait” for God’s judgment and their future reward at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS - LUKE 16:19-31

Believe it or not, this is the ONLY place in the entire New Testament that suggests that a lost soul goes into a fiery hell immediately at death. This idea is not taught anywhere else - not by Matthew, Mark, John, James, Peter or Paul.

Jesus often told parables. While containing many practical lessons, parables are not meant to be taken literally. Here are 9 reasons why the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is definitely a parable:

1. Jesus often began his parables in the book of Luke with the phrase, “a certain...” See Luke 12:16; 13:6; 14:16; 15:11; 16:1; 19:11-12; 20:9 (KJV).

2. A man cannot literally enter into “the bosom” or chest of Abraham.
3. It is impossible for anyone who is literally burning in fire to carry on a normal conversation.
4. Can those in heaven and hell talk to each other?
5. The rich man was represented as being “bodily” in hell, with eyes, a mouth, a tongue, etc. This is obviously symbolic. If the rich man’s grave was dug up, wouldn’t his body be there? Of course.
6. A real man burning in fire would not ask for a little water to cool his tongue. (He would ask for the fire brigade!)
7. Jesus Christ did not interpret every parable He told. Yet He did interpret the parable of the wheat and the weeds in Matthew 13. In His interpretation of this parable, Jesus said plainly that hell-fire occurs at the end, rather than at death. Read Matthew 13:40.
8. Consciousness at death contradicts the rest of the Bible. Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Psalms 6:5; 115:17; 146:4; etc.
9. 2 Peter 2:9 says that the lost will not be punished until “the day of judgment” which occurs at the end of the 1000 years (see Revelation 20:11-15).

The purpose of this parable was to teach the greedy Pharisees that contrary to their present opinions, the rich are not necessarily blessed and the poor cursed (16:14, 22-23), that a man’s destiny is fixed at death (16:26), that speaking against Him with their “tongues” would result in their going into hell-fire (16:4), and that if they would not believe Moses and the prophets, a resurrection would not convince them (16:29, 31). Thus Jesus declared that we must believe Moses and the prophets. Nowhere in the writings of “Moses and the prophets” do people instantly go to heaven or into hell-fire at death. Why did Jesus use the name Lazarus? Because this parable was also a prophecy. At the end of His life Jesus would resurrect a real person named Lazarus, yet this miracle would still not convince the Pharisees that He was the Messiah. John 11:1-53.

Note: We should interpret parables in the light of the rest of the Bible, rather than the rest of the Bible in the light of one parable.

SAUL, SAMUEL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR - 1 SAMUEL 28:5-14

Did King Saul really speak to Samuel after his death? Do the whole host of scriptures that clearly state the dead sleep until the second coming of Christ contradict this

passage? Definitely not! In 1 Samuel chapter 28 we find Saul afraid of the host of Philistines and so enquiring after the Lord for help. But the Lord would not answer Saul so he went to the witch of Endor to see if he could contact Samuel from the grave and have him ask God how he could gain victory over the Philistines.

Saul of course sinned greatly by inquiring of an evil spirit in place of the Lord. If Samuel had actually gone to heaven, Satan would certainly not have been given permission to bring him down in response to the incantations of a wicked woman. The figure that appeared to the witch had to be an impersonation of Samuel by a demon or even Satan himself. If Satan can appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), he can certainly appear as the prophet Samuel. Note in verse 11 that Samuel was supposedly brought up from below. Heretical but popular theology says that righteous people such as Samuel would come down from heaven, but pagan ideas assume that the dead are below ground. This popular pagan idea about death had obviously crept into the beliefs of God's people well before the time of Christ. See the story of the rich man and Lazarus earlier and John chapter 11 for example.

This witch of Endor was known for having a familiar spirit but what is a familiar spirit? It is certainly not an angel of God because of His strong condemnation against consulting with them. A familiar spirit is a demonic spirit (fallen angel) that is in league with Satan. This is what the woman at Endor had. She had communication with a demon that was quite capable of impersonating Samuel. It was not Samuel who appeared but a demon masquerading as Samuel. Note in verse 12 that the first thing the demon did was expose Saul's masquerade to the witch. Note also that Saul did not actually see anything himself and had to ask what she saw. The witch replied that she saw gods ascending out of the earth and an old man covered with a mantle. What were these so called gods ascending out of the earth with Samuel? More demons! Saul assumed it was Samuel he communicated with based only on what the witch said. Since the witch said she saw Samuel coming up from out of the earth (not down from heaven), King Saul was putting his trust completely in a spirit medium, a necromancer, a witch, against the expressed will of God. So the conversation that followed was not between Saul and Samuel, but between Saul and a witch with a familiar (demonic) spirit.

So with all these facts in mind and understanding what the Word teaches about the state of the dead and the circumstances of Saul's relationship with God at the time, we know that it could not have been Samuel raised from the dead but a fallen angel. The fact that Saul even attempted this séance with a witch or spirit medium was an abomination and rebellion against God of which Saul paid for with his life.

1 Chronicles 10:13-14 "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel* of *one that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of

Jesse.”

The italicized words in verse 13 are added by the translator and are not in the original Hebrew text. So if we translate 1 Chronicles 10:13 verbatim, it actually reads as follows:

1 Chronicles 10:13 “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking of a familiar spirit, to enquire;”

So this verse also actually states that Saul communicated with a demonic spirit and not the prophet Samuel! One must not base their theology on what they think one scripture shows when several black and white scriptures clearly say otherwise.

OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCES

Some will say, but what about all those out of body experiences you hear about? Firstly, when a persons heart stops beating they are not actually dead yet but their body is being derived of oxygen. It has been scientifically proven that when the body is deprived of oxygen that it can start to hallucinate and or have dreams which will probably be based on one’s own beliefs. In one experiment Dr. Ladislav Meduna administered 30% Carbon Dioxide and 70% Oxygen to a subject. Afterwards the subject stated, “I felt as though I was looking at myself, as though I was way out there in space...I felt sort of separated.” There have also been many other experiments done that have made the person feel as though they were having an out of body experience. One cannot base their theology on what one claims to have experienced. The word of God is very clear and is totally trustworthy. One cannot go by what they think they have seen or felt. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight:”

CONCLUSION

Does it really matter if we know what happens when we die? Most definitely! The Bible says that people who misunderstand the subject of death will almost assuredly be deceived by the Devil on other issues including the final Battle of Armageddon. Revelation 16:14 says, “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” We must understand what the Bible really says happens when a person dies and what is the truth about death. David declares that man is not conscious in death. “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Psalm 146:4. Solomon has the same testimony, “The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything.” “Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.” “There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, 10.

Jesus said that He would go and prepare a place for us so when comes again we can be with Him where He is now. Obviously the dead cannot possibly be with Him there

now according to the words of Jesus. John 14:2-3 says, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. Seances and lying demons 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also." So this is what happens when you die from the Word of God and by no mans interpretation. This leaves only one conclusion to those who believe they have spoken to loved ones in séances etc. Since the dead sleep until the second coming of Christ, theses manifestations have to be demons masquerading as our loved ones to deceive us. As for Purgatory, it is found nowhere in the Bible and was manufactured by the Papacy as a means of extorting money from people through the dark ages. (No offence intended to the many wonderful people in the Roman Catholic Church) Truth is truth and this is the truth about death. As there is no consciousness of time in sleep, the moment we close our eyes we will see Jesus coming in the clouds of Angels.

SUMMARY USING SCRIPTURES

Here are just some of the Old Testament scriptures that could be quoted to prove what happens when you die.

Ecclesiastes 9:5 "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."

Ecclesiastes 9:10 "Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you goest."

Job 14:12 "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Psalms 13:3 "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;" If I was in heaven, I most definitely would be praising the Lord. How about you?

Psalms 115:17 "The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence."

Daniel 12:2 "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Below are most of the New Testament scriptures that can be quoted that proves what happens when you die.

Luke 23:42-43 "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when you comest into your kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, To day[,] shall you

be with me in paradise.”

Punctuation, chapter and verses were added when the Bible was translated and the above verse has to be wrongly punctuated to be consistent with ALL other scripture. The following translation of the same verse done by “The Scriptures 1998, Copyright by the Institute for Scripture Research” has been correctly punctuated.

Luke 23:43 TS98 “And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

The following three verses prove that Jesus had not yet gone to His Father in Paradise on the Sunday let alone on the Friday.

John 20:17 “Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

Revelation 2:7 “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE, which is in the midst of the PARADISE of God.”

Revelation 22:1-3 “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the TREE OF LIFE, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:”

HERE IS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT PUNCTUATION IS NOT INSPIRED.

Acts 19:12 KJV “So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”

In the above verse we see the diseases departed from the sick handkerchiefs or aprons. The comma should have been placed after the word “sick.” There are many such examples throughout the King James Bible as well as other translations.

John 5:28-29 “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

John 6:39 “And this is the Father's will which has sent me, that of all which he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

John 6:40 “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last

day.”

John 6:44 “No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

ONE MORE TIME JUST FOR GOOD MEASURE.

John 6:54 “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 11:11-14 “These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13 Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

Martha understood this as well as she said to Jesus that if He had been there earlier that Lazarus would not have died.

John 11:24 “Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

John 14:1-3 “Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Acts 2:29 “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.”

Acts 2:34 “For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit you on my right hand,”

This is what Stephen said as he died when he was stoned. It was obviously well known in those days that death was referred to as a sleep.

Acts 7:60 “And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

Acts 24:15 “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”

1 Corinthians 15:6 “After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.”

While still speaking of the resurrection of the dead, Paul shows quite clearly what happens when you die. Paul says in verses 17 and 18, that if Christ did not rise from the dead then all those that are fallen asleep (dead) have also totally perished. He also says that Christ was the firstfruits, that is, the first to be risen from the dead and afterwards, those at His second coming will be resurrected (verse 23).

1 Corinthians 15:12-23 "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."



1 Corinthians 15:51-54 "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."



1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Section Five

Speaking in Tongues

The Bible reveals that God gave many spiritual gifts to the Church when His Spirit was first given at Pentecost and in 1 Corinthians 12:31 Paul instructed us to seek after the best gifts. But it seems that the majority of the time that there is only one gift being sort after, which is the gift of speaking in tongues that is also referred to as ecstatic tongues and glossolalia.

Since glossolalia was first revealed in scripture to be speaking in other known languages where the speaker understands what they are saying, then what is it we are primarily seeing in the Church today? Those practicing this incoherent glossolalia as seen today claim that there are two types of tongues where they say that one is the gift of speaking other languages and the second is a prayer language. But where in scripture is the second one demonstrated and where does it actually teach this without having to make any form of an assumption? We know at Pentecost they spoke in other languages to preach the Gospel to all the foreigners that were present and the Church grew by three thousand that day as a result. But where does it say beyond any doubt whatsoever that glossolalia is a prayer language or the language of angels that some also claim?

You most commonly find 1 Corinthians 14:4 is quoted but the context of the passage reveals that Paul is saying that he would rather that we prophesy than speak in tongues as that edifies the whole Church but tongues only edifies oneself so he is saying do not do it unless it edifies the Church. The entire chapter is in fact one of rebuke to the Corinthians for the abuse of the gift of tongues.

The other very disconcerting fact is that ecstatic tongues predates Pentecost and are of non-Christian origin and this should be of extreme concern. So we cannot say that every occurrence of glossolalia is from God and yet most Christians do not seem to be concerned at all. So how do we know if our apparent gift is from God? And if we do not understand what we are speaking then how can we ever be 100% certain of what we are saying? Some say that the Holy Spirit would never allow us to be deceived like that but Jesus said that if possible even the elect can be deceived.

And if there are two types of tongues-speaking then why does the incoherent speech seem to be so freely given in the Church today yet you almost never here of the gift of tongues as demonstrated in scripture being given to missionaries who really need it? You find that almost every time that missionaries have to learn the language the

hard way and yet Acts chapter 2 demonstrates that the gift of tongues is for the spreading of the Gospel message. So what is more important? Self edification or preaching the Gospel for the salvation of as many people as possible?

Satan counterfeits all the spiritual gifts and many other things of God, so if the first occurrence of speaking in tongues was at Pentecost and for preaching the Gospel, then what is the counterfeit from Satan? If God were to give us the ability to pray by the power of the Holy Spirit then why not empower us to do so in our own language rather than having no idea what we are saying? Is God not capable of doing this? We should know that there is nothing that God can't do.

When the Apostles asked Jesus to teach them how to pray there is not one mention of glossolalia as we see it in the Church today and in fact there is no record of Jesus Christ even mentioning it at all. In the great love chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 we find some claiming that Paul spoke in the tongues of angels and use this as support for what we see today. But if that was so then Paul also said that he gave his body to be burned but that was not so and hence not what he was saying. Paul was giving examples of how such things are of no comparison to love. He states that even if he could do all the things he just mentioned that it would not profit him anything if he had not love.

In 1 Corinthians 12:7 Paul states that every single one of the gifts of the spirit were given by God for the profit of all. In other words, they were given for the edification of the Church. So how does the incoherent speech seen today edify the rest of the Church?

There are many such passages in scripture that those promoting tongues-speaking claim support this practice but are these passages being abused or misunderstood or are they genuine?

WHAT IS SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Glossolalia or speaking in tongues is practiced by an estimated 100 million Christians in the world today and the number engaging in this practice is growing at a massive rate every year. That is approximately 20% of all Christians. These statistics originally included my family so note that we have had first hand experience with tongues. But what many are wanting to know is if what is seen in the Church today is always from God or are there other explanations. Note that speaking in tongues is also known as glossolalia, unknown tongues and ecstatic tongues.

HISTORY OF GLOSSOLALIA

Throughout recorded history there have been many occasions where people have spoken in what was called ecstatic tongues. Note most of these accounts predate Pentecost and were of non-Christian origin. Christians therefore can not say with confidence that every occurrence of glossolalia must be an expression of the will of

God even though many do subscribe to this view. Those practicing tongues today portray Pentecost as the supreme example of supernatural tongues; however, the recorded cases of glossolalia go back as far as 1100 B.C. On that occasion a young Amen worshiper attracted historical infamy when he became possessed by a god and began to make sounds in a strange ecstatic tongue.

Seven hundred years later, the Greek philosopher Plato demonstrated that he was well acquainted with the phenomenon of speaking in tongues as he referred to several families who practiced ecstatic speech, praying and utterings while supposedly possessed. He also pointed out that these practices had even brought physical healing to those who engaged in them. Plato and most of his contemporaries asserted that these occurrences were caused by divine inspiration. He suggested that God takes possession of the mind while man sleeps or is possessed and during this state, God inspires him with utterances which he can neither understand nor interpret. This does NOT mean of course that one practising speaking in tongues as seen today is possessed or not saved. That of course is just simply not true. When God confused the languages of His people who were rebelling at Babel in Genesis 11, they also spoke in "new tongues" and note this happened without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In the last century before Christ, Virgil described the speaking of ecstatic tongues of the Sybilline priestess on the Island of Delos as the result of her being unified with the god Apollo. This happened while she meditated in a haunted cave amidst the eerie sounds of the wind playing strange music through the narrow crevices in the rocks.

Several of the mystery religions of the Greco-Roman world record the same phenomenon of speaking in tongues. Some of those most often listed are the Mithra cult of the Persians; the Osiris cult originating in the land of the Pharaohs, and the lesser known Dionysian, Eulusinian, and Orphic cults cradled in Macedonia, Thrace and Greece. Another indication comes from Lucian of Samosata (A.D. 120-198) who in *De Dea Syria* describes an example of glossolalia as exhibited by a roaming believer of June, the Syrian goddess, stationed at Hierapolis in Syria. It is also interesting to note that the term glossolalia used so widely today comes from the Greek vernacular which was in existence long before the day of Pentecost. It should be frightening to all Christians that what we see now in the Church today, resembles these occurrences of ecstatic tongues that took place in these ancient cults before the day of Pentecost and that what took place at Pentecost does not in any way resemble these occurrences. At Pentecost, it was undoubtedly and unarguably the speaking of foreign languages.

Believe it or not, speaking in tongues as seen in the Church today is a fairly recent phenomenon in Christianity. It came about in four waves. The 1st wave started around 1901 and was founded in the traditional Pentecostal movement by Charles

Parham of Bethel College, Kansas. The 2nd wave, neo-Pentecostalism or the Charismatic movement entered most Churches in the early 1960's in Van Nuys, California, under Dennis Bennett, Rector of St Marks Episcopal (Anglican) Church. In ten years it spread to all major Protestant families of the world, reaching a total of 55 million people by 1990. It included the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Roman Catholics and many others. The 3rd wave, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement started in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1967 among students and faculty of Duquesne University, and by 1993 it touched the lives of over 100 million Catholics in over 238 nations. And the 4th wave was the Evangelicals that started in 1981 at Fuller Theological Seminary with John Wimber. By 1990, 33 million in the world were moving in signs and wonders, though they play down labels such as "Pentecostal" and "Charismatic."

SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS NOT UNIQUELY CHRISTIAN

Tongues as we see it today did not come about as a result of studying the Bible. It just out of the blue happened. It should be of extreme concern to all Christians, because as already shown, it is not uniquely a Christian practice by any means. Various studies have revealed that speaking in tongues is present in non-Christian religions all around the world. It is practiced in China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Siberia, Arabia, Burma, and Arctic regions just to name a few. Glossolalia is found among the Eskimos, Japanese séances in Hokkaido, in a small cult led by Genji Yanagide of Moji City, the shamans in Ethiopia in the zar cult and various spirits in Haitian Voodoo and is also found extensively in African tribal religions.

Since history records that the practice of tongues goes back well before Pentecost in Acts chapter two, which was speaking in foreign languages, is speaking in tongues as we see it today from God, or as some claim from demonic sources or are there other explanations? Does what Paul speak of in regards to spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14 relate to what we see in Churches today? Why do Christians that practice speaking in tongues as we see it today, now call it a heavenly language or the tongues of Angels?

WHAT IS THE REAL TRUTH ON TONGUES?

Many Christians believe that speaking in tongues is the fulfilment of the Latter Rain promised in Joel 2:28-29 and that it is the final manifestation of the Holy Spirit before the Second Coming of Christ. It is also commonly taught that you have not received the Holy Spirit and are not saved unless you have demonstrated the gift of tongues and it seems to be the only sought after gift in the Church today.

So what is the real truth about tongues? Can we go by experience and feelings or do we go by the Word of God? The only way to find the truth to these questions of course has to be the Bible and the Bible alone. There is no other way. Everything we need to know for our Christian walk can be found in the Word of God and if not clearly taught in God's Word, then we should not follow it lest we be deceived. The

Bible warns us of this fact many times. In this document we will cover all aspects of speaking in tongues (glossolalia) from the Bible alone. We will not be going by experiences, feelings or so called "physical evidence." We cannot afford to adopt an interpretation which demands a change in God's Word. It is our interpretation that should change if necessary to fit the Bible – not the Bible changed to fit our interpretation. Since the enemy can and does counterfeit miracles of God we must follow the Bible alone.

2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

Many Christians that practice tongues as seen in the Church today exclaim it is not possible for this feeling not to be from God. They make this statement with absolute confidence as if it is totally impossible for them to be deceived despite the fact that Jesus Himself warns us ever so clearly that if possible, even the elect can be deceived.

Matthew 24:24 says, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

And hence the following warning must always be heeded and especially in regards to tongues as most commonly seen today where there can be no conclusive evidence of what one is saying. So how is this accomplished beyond all doubt, which of course means excluding personal thoughts and feelings?

1 John 4:1 "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God..."

THE OUTPOURING OF THE LATTER RAIN

The land of Israel had two main seasons of rain designated as the early or first rain, and the latter rain, and God promised that if Israel as a nation was faithful and obedient, these rainy seasons would never fail.

Deuteronomy 11:14 "That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil."

These terms early and latter rain are also used in the Bible figuratively to designate God's blessing in His Church (Hosea 6:3; Zechariah 10:1) and in Joel 2:23-27 these terms are used in conjunction with the outpouring of God's Spirit "before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come." (Verses 28-32)

Joel 2:23-24 "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. 24 And the floors

shall be full of wheat, and the fountains shall overflow with wine and oil."

Joel 2:31-32 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

So if then the first occurrence of speaking in tongues on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is designated as the early rain by which the seed of the Gospel was planted and germinated and commenced its vigorous growth by the gift of tongues, then "before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come" we are according to Joel 2:28-29 to expect another or latter rain.

Joel 2:28 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:"

It was this very prophecy you will recall, that Peter quoted on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21) but its completed and final fulfilment still awaits us when God cuts short His work in righteousness in "a short work" (Romans 9:28) in the last days when in tremendous power the whole earth will be "lightened with his glory" and the message of God is represented as crying "mightily with a strong voice." (Revelation 18:1-2)

In Revelation 14:6, 14-20 God's last message is described as going "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people." Perhaps the real gift of tongues will play a significant role. The Church is now on the threshold of the most stupendous events ever witnessed. In the world; sin, degradation, misery, calamity, fear, violence, war and hatred such as the world has never seen before (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 11:18); but in the church such power as the world has never seen before when the whole world will be "lightened with His glory" (Revelation 18:1)

DECEPTIONS AND COUNTERFEITS OF SATAN

Christians should not be unmindful of the fact that Satan is a student of prophecy and can read all the above events with almost unerring accuracy. He knows better than we do, that in fulfilment of prophecy, God's Holy Spirit is about to be poured out upon His people with the Pentecostal power of the Latter Rain. Satan would be untrue to his nature if he did not seek to counterfeit God's outpouring of His Spirit in the last days with his own quick and early spurious revival and utterly false manifestations such as a counterfeit version of tongues in order to deceive millions in this world. The warnings are repeated all through God's Word.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 says, "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders."

For those looking for signs, evidences, miracles, wonders, manifestations and proofs such as tongues, Satan can and will supply everything to satisfy the pride of the natural human heart. Sadly, the world today does not want to have to think. Its great lust is for a titivating of the senses. Alcohol, drugs, the discotheque, loud overpowering pulsating music all cater to this desire. Those in religious circles who are also looking for ecstasy of feeling, emotions release, uninhibited expression, and "feelings" of "being in the spirit", Satan will also have something to please exactly so everyone possible will be swept into his net. The common desire shared in the drug world and the natural human heart is for feelings of power rather than purity, emotion rather than duty, ecstasy rather than obedience, feelings rather than faith, spiritual enlightenment rather than the discipline of earnest study of God's Word verse by verse. To all such Satan has his counterfeit and speaking in tongues is no exception. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

The Bible very clearly outlines its warnings of the deceptions of the last days. "Satan himself" we are told "is transformed into an angel of light" and "his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). Matthew 24:24 foretells "false Christ's, and false prophets" showing "great signs and wonders" so clever and overpowering that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Revelation 13:13-14 "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast..."

And who gave power to the beast?

Revelation 13:4 "And they worshipped the dragon [Satan] which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

And Revelation 16:14 speaks again of "...spirits of devils, working miracles..." Satan will even go as far as to make one believe they have cast out demons just to deceive, and why wouldn't he. Many have accepted the false gift of tongues believing it is genuine by such deceptions. He is after all the great deceiver which the majority all too often under estimate. So how do we safe guard against Satan's deceptions? The scriptures below give some excellent guidance.

Isaiah 8:20 "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Matthew 22:29 "...Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

Acts 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

1 John 4:1 "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God..."

Satan can present a counterfeit so closely resembling the truth that it deceives those who are willing to be deceived, who desire to shun the self-denial and sacrifice demanded by the truth; but it is impossible for Satan to hold under his power one soul who honestly desires at whatever cost to know the truth. Sadly, speaking in tongues is lustfully coveted. Before Jesus returns there will be a true revival but we are warned that the counterfeit will precede it. Satan has always worked by bringing the counterfeit ahead of the genuine because when the true comes it is much harder to accept when the counterfeit has already been accepted. All of the above are very serious warnings we cannot afford to ignore. We must be able to test the spirits to see if they are from God and we absolutely cannot go by our desires and feelings or experiences lest we fall victim to the enemy who will and does work on the desires and lusts of our hearts. I pray with all my heart that you will read on and consider these things very seriously.

WHAT DOES THE WORD TONGUES MEAN?

The term tongues when used in reference to speaking just simply means "language". The Greek word is "glossa" and means "tongue, language," and the verb "laleo" means "to speak", producing the word "glossolalia". Here is the definition from the Strong's and Thayer dictionaries:

Strong's Definition: "glossa", pronounced "gloce'-sah" Of uncertain affinity; the tongue; by implication a language (specifically one naturally unacquired): - tongue.

Thayer Definition: "glossa"

1) The tongue, a member of the body, an organ of speech.

2) A tongue.

1a) the language or dialect used by a particular people distinct from that of other nations.

REFERENCES TO GLOSSOLALIA IN THE KJV BIBLE

The scriptures below are all references to the word tongues in the King James Bible. They have been grouped so one can clearly see all references to glossolalia and what they are referring to;

THE ONLY MENTION OF GLOSSOLALIA IN THE GOSPELS

Mark 16:17 "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they

cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;”

THE FULFILMENT OF JESUS WORDS IN MARK 16:17

Acts 2:3-4 “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 2:8 “And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?”

Acts 2:11 “Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”

Peter’s confirmation that the Gentiles could be baptised:

Acts 10:46-48 “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Paul finds disciples who had not received the Holy Spirit:

Acts 19:6 “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied.”

PAUL’S REFERENCES TO THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 12:10 “To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:”

1 Corinthians 12:28 “And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

1 Corinthians 12:30 “Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?”

PAUL’S EMPHASIS ON THE VALUE OF LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:1 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

1 Corinthians 13:8 “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

PAUL’S WARNING AND REBUKE TO THE CORINTHIANS

1 Corinthians 14:2 “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto

men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”

1 Corinthians 14:4-6 “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that you all spoke with tongues, but rather that you prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. 6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?”

1 Corinthians 14:9 “So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for you shall speak into the air.”

1 Corinthians 14:13-14 “Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.”

1 Corinthians 14:18-19 “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

1 Corinthians 14:21-23 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. 23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad?”

1 Corinthians 14:26-27 “How is it then, brethren? when you come together, every one of you has a psalm, has a doctrine, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.”

1 Corinthians 14:39 “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.”

SPEAKING IN TONGUES IN THE GOSPELS

You will note from the previous scripture list that the only reference to tongues in the Gospels is recorded in Mark 16:17

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;”

This statement made by Jesus to His Apostles on the gift of tongues is in the context of the Great Commission, to preach the gospel to the whole world, to every creature. Jesus' disciples were to receive the power of the gift of the Holy Spirit and they were to proclaim the Good News of what Jesus had achieved for all mankind, first in Israel, and then to all nations, tongues (foreign languages) and peoples. Note how the signs were to confirm the Gospel message.

Mark 16:20 “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.”

During their previous ministry the disciples had been restricted to Israel, but now their ministry was to go far beyond the borders of Palestine into countries where other languages were spoken.

HOW DID THE APOSTLES PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS?

In Acts chapter two we have the first and most significant mention of tongues. How were the Apostles to preach the Gospel to every nation? It was by one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit – the gift of speaking in tongues. This is the entire purpose of the gifts of the Spirit – to benefit all for the advancement of God's kingdom.

1 Corinthians 12:7 “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:”

Paul explains to the Corinthians that the gifts of the spirit are for the advancement of God's kingdom on Earth and are not for personal edification. So was the gift of tongues used for the Church? This is how the passage in Acts chapter two reads from the NKJV Bible

Acts 2:1-11 “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both

Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

So was the gift of tongues for the benefit of the Church? Was it a sign to unbelievers as Paul said? Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:22

"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not..."

What Paul is saying is that tongues are a sign to unbelievers who are moved when they hear the gospel spoken in their tongue by men who had never learned or understood it. This is exactly what happened at Pentecost. They were all amazed when they heard these unlearned Galileans speaking in their own native tongue. So did the gift benefit the Church? We find the answer revealed towards the end of chapter two.

Acts 2:41 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Note the word "gave" in verse Acts 2:4 denotes a gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues is not a learned experience. This is in contrast to the common practice in Pentecostal and the Charismatic meetings where they are taught or instructed how to receive the gift of tongues. When the true gift of tongues is given, no prompting or teaching is required, it just happens naturally by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many associate the word utterance with uttering, as in quiet mutterings as seen in much of the tongue speaking today. But the word translated "utterance" in Acts 2:4 actually means "to speak out loudly and clearly" or "to speak with emphasis." Strong's gives this definition: "apophtheggomai" pronounced "ap-of-theng'-om-ahee" From G575 and G5350; to enunciate plainly, that is, declare: - say, speak forth, utterance.

It is obvious from this passage in Acts chapter two, that all of these people from many different countries were hearing the Gospel in their own language for their nation. The languages in which the disciples were speaking were known foreign languages and dialects, not unintelligible mutterings. And they were amazed that these Galileans, uneducated in the "proper" schools, and all from a lower class of society, could speak these foreign languages. Luke is emphasizing to the reader that the miraculous gift of speaking in other languages at Pentecost was the ability to speak articulate, intelligible, foreign languages which had not been learned previously and were not learned at that time. The gift of tongues (languages) was instant and spontaneous and not "learned." As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:7, the gifts of the spirit were for the benefit and growth of the whole Church and here we see no better demonstration on how speaking in tongues not only benefited the Church, but made

it grow at a phenomenal rate and no assumptions are required.

In Acts chapter ten we have the second occurrence of speaking in tongues. Was this any different to the first occurrence? This is how the passage reads.

Acts 10:44-48 "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Peter who was prejudiced against the Gentiles was reluctant to baptise them but when they began speaking in tongues he knew it was God's will for them to be baptised in water also. This second occurrence of tongues (other foreign languages) is further shown by Peter giving an eyewitness account that it was the same situation as in Acts chapter two.

Acts 11:15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning."

He affirmed that God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us (at Pentecost) when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 11:17 "If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Peter had no doubt that the gift of tongues (foreign languages) by the believers in Caesarea was "the same gift" of miraculously speaking foreign languages as the gift which he and the other followers of Jesus received on the day of Pentecost. In the very book we see the Church established, we also see the first use of speaking in tongues and being used for that very purpose. Every mention is a known language for the purpose of taking the Gospel to every nation. It is never introduced as a personal communication language with God.

CAN SPEAKING IN TONGUES BE THE LANGUAGE OF ANGELS?

Does Paul say that he speaks in the tongues of Angels? If this is what Paul is saying, then he is also saying that he understands all mysteries, has all knowledge (only God is omniscient) and has all faith that can remove mountains and that he is giving his body to be burned. That is just not possible and Paul did not give his body to be burned and so cannot be what he is teaching. This is the passage from the King James Version Bible.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

The translators of the KJV Bible have actually failed us on this occasion in the translating of the word "though" which in Greek is "ean", pronounced eh-an'. This is the Thayer Definition: 1) if, in case.

The Greek word "ean" should have been translated to the word "if" and not as "though". In all other places in the KJV Bible, more than 90% of the time it was translated to the word "if" and it should have translated to "if" in these verses also. The Contemporary English Version translates 1 Corinthians 13:1 as follows,

"What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels? If I did not love others, I would be nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

And the VW-Edition Bible translates it as follows,

"If I were to speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."

Almost all other Bible translations have also use the word "if" and not "though" and as you can see it makes a large difference as to how the verse reads. For those wondering, Paul was beheaded, not burned.

Paul is saying "If" I had all knowledge, "If" I could speak in the tongues of Angels, "If" I understood all mysteries, "If" I could remove mountains, "If" I were to give my body to be burned but had not love, I might as well be like a clanging symbol. Paul is using superlatives i.e. he is giving exaggerated examples to make his point on the importance of love and how without love it profits him nothing. Speaking of love and gifts;

Paul also says, 1 Corinthians 13:8 "Charity [love] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be [gift of] knowledge, it shall vanish away." If tongues were angelic, how could they possibly cease? Is God going to take away the voices of all the angels? If tongues were angelic then surely we would be speaking in tongues all the more once we got to heaven.

ARE YOU SAVED IF YOU DON'T SPEAK IN TONGUES?

The teaching and belief of some that you have not received the Holy Spirit if you do not speak in tongues comes from Mark 16:17-18 that we have previously discussed.

It reads, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;"

Some say this verse proves the apostles would be speaking in new tongues that never existed before but it could just as easily mean to speak in tongues that were new to them. Speaking in new tongues was fulfilled at Pentecost as the apostles spoke in new tongues as they spread the Gospel to all the nations and commenced God's Church. This is the purpose for all the gifts as Paul said "to the profit of all." Further research found that there are in fact two Greek words for "new." One means brand new never existed before and the other means to renew. Guess which one is used here? It is not brand new but the renew. Jesus is saying they would speak in tongues which were new to them but already known, that is, recognizable languages which is exactly what happened at Pentecost.

Mark 16:17 says "them that believe." Nothing is said of salvation or the Holy Spirit. The question is whether Jesus meant that all these signs will follow every single person or whether Jesus was having a private conversation with His Apostles and was only telling them that these are various signs and miracles that you will see follow those who believe as you take the Gospel to the world. Remember this statement by Jesus was made to His Apostles as He instructed them in regards to the Great Commission. What Jesus was saying did not stop at verse 17 as He continues to say in verse 18. Mark 16:18 says,

"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

If we choose to take Jesus words as meaning all these things will be done by he who believes and that the person is not saved unless he does, then in order to be saved we must be able to demonstrate the following; We must be able to demonstrate speaking in tongues, casting out more than one demon, being bitten by a snake and drink poison and not get sick or die, and we must be able to lay hands on any sick person at any time and always have them recover. Hands up those who have met these requirements! My hand is definitely down. There have been various cults over the years that decided foolishly to take every word Jesus said literally and tried to perform the deadly acts and many have died as a result.

If Jesus was referring to the things that the Apostles would see and do, did these things happen? Did they all receive the gift of tongues? A common and very much needed gift in taking the Gospel to the world back in the first century but Paul still tells us NO. But obviously most did due to the need. Did they cast out demons? Yes, the Apostles cast out many demons. Did any get bitten by snakes and not get sick or die? Yes, Paul did.

Acts 28:3-6 "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire,

there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. 5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god."

Did they lay hands on the sick and did they all recover? Yes, example Acts 19:11-12, "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

I am not too sure where poison enters the equation. Jesus was most likely pointing out that if they had it would not have hurt them. But I very strongly suggest not putting God to the test on that one today as the odds are you will most surely die.

To claim that speaking in tongues must be a sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is to say that men like Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Calvin and thousand of others were never baptised with the Holy Spirit and are not saved. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was for the select chosen few such as Prophets and Kings. What about the multitude of God's other chosen people? There is not one mention of tongues by any of God's anointed. The Bible says by their fruits you shall know them. (Matthew 7:16, 20) Not by if they speak in tongues! The Bible frequently speaks of people filled with the Holy Ghost and no tongues are given or spoken.

Luke 1:15 – John the Baptist "full of the Holy Ghost" no tongue speaking.

Luke 1:41 – Elizabeth "filled with the Holy Ghost" and no tongue speaking.

Luke 1:67 – Zacharias "filled with the Holy Ghost" and no tongue speaking.

Luke 3:22; 4:1,18 – Life of Jesus an example of being "full of the Holy Ghost" and no tongues ever evidenced.

Jesus is our example of all things and before He sealed the New Covenant with His blood that Friday afternoon He had given us an example in all things necessary to our salvation. Obedience, repentance, faith and Baptism are points. But He never gave us an example of speaking in tongues to indicate this was necessary.

Acts 4:31 – Believers "all filled with the Holy Ghost" no tongues.

Acts 7:55 – Stephen "full of the Holy Ghost" no tongues.

Acts 8:14-17 – Samaritan believers "received the Holy Ghost" and no tongues.

Now if tongues had been spoken in all of the above cases, surely there would have been mention of it as tongues was a new and miraculous thing. The Bible teaches that having made our surrender to God and having asked Him in faith for the Holy Spirit, we can believe by faith He will supply what He promised.

Galatians 3:14 – “receive the promise of the Spirit through FAITH.”

Galatians 3:2 – “received ye the spirit...by the hearing of FAITH.”

Galatians 3:5 – “ministereth to you the Spirit...by the hearing of FAITH.”

Ephesians 3:16,17 – “strengthened with might by his Spirit...that Christ may dwell in your hearts by FAITH.”

Here is one of the most important aspects of the Christian life, i.e. the acceptance of salvation, forgiveness of sins, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit – by faith. Now faith is defined as “the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) But we think it is necessary to demand of a debtor some security or a signed I.O.U or something tangible we can see and if necessary produce in court. Here the element of complete faith is lacking. Like doubting Thomas, we will not believe unless we see and feel and have tangible evidence such as speaking in tongues. But faith toward God does not demand such things for we believe that God is and that He always speaks the truth and we require no proof from Him of the fulfilment of His word for we trust Him. It is so because He says so.

So having fulfilled the conditions of surrender to our Lord, fully and completely, and having asked Him for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we then by faith believe that He has fulfilled His promise and it is so and there should be NO doubt. This is where so many people go astray. They demand of their God some tangible sign or evidence. But let us carefully note again the teachings of the Bible that “we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:14); and faith, as we have also noted is “the evidence of things not seen.”

We believe God has forgiven us our sins in keeping His promise of 1 John 1:9 – by FAITH.

We believe He has saved us and given us everlasting life according to John 3:16 – by FAITH.

We believe He will never leave us nor forsake us according to Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20 – by FAITH.

And so we believe that having asked God in keeping with His promise of Luke 11:13, “how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” We believe we have received – by FAITH.

This element of faith is so important that the Bible says “without faith it is impossible to please him.” (Hebrews 11:6) Jesus said in Matthew 16:4 “A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it...” and He also said in John 4:48 “...Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” If we are truly God’s children we do not need signs for when God has promised we should believe He fulfils His promises. Did Paul say tongues was a sign to those who believe? No. Paul said quite the opposite. 1 Corinthians 14:22 “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...”

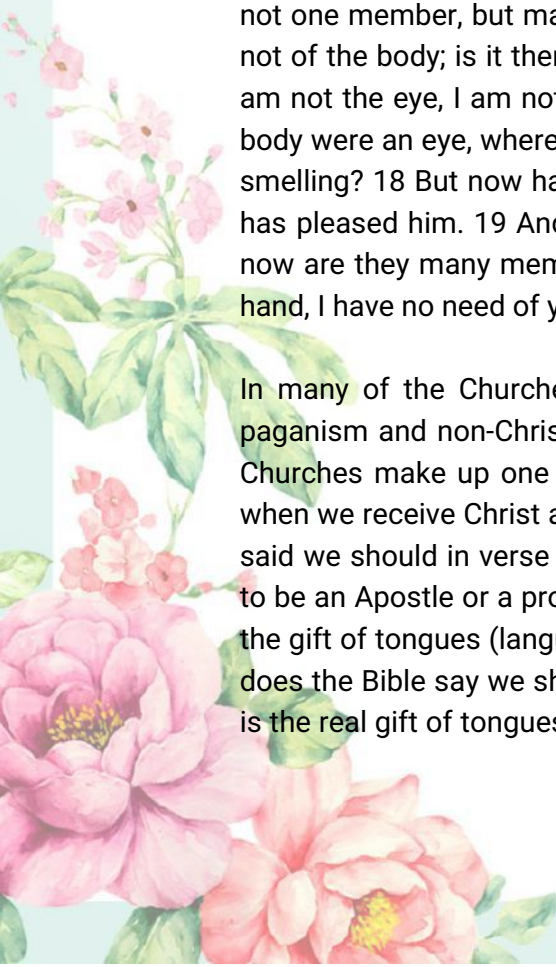
The only other issue of receiving the Holy Spirit is obedience. Acts 5:32 "...and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." We do not have to practice glossolalia to be saved or prove we have the Holy Spirit and here is the final conclusive proof if you accept that the Bible never contradicts itself.

1 Corinthians 12:4-10 "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:"

As you can see, Paul tells us that we all receive different gifts from the Holy Spirit. Paul goes on to demonstrate how we all make up the body of Christ and how the body would not be complete if we all had the same gift. Note in the following passage how Paul shows we all make up a valuable part of the body of Christ no matter what gift we have been given. Every single gift from the Holy Spirit is just as valuable and important.



1 Corinthians 12:12-21 "For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."



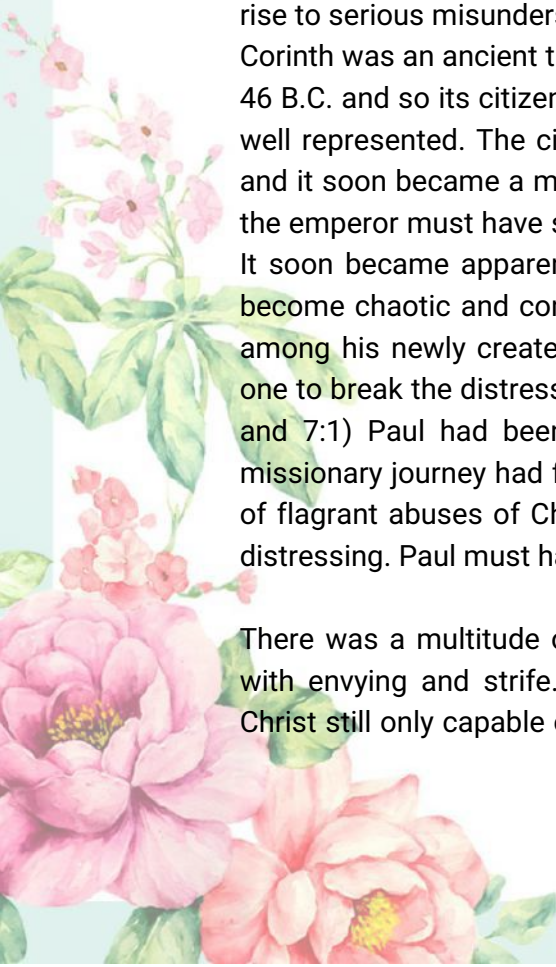
In many of the Churches practicing speaking in tongues today as it appeared in paganism and non-Christian cults, I think it would be fair to say that many of these Churches make up one giant tongue and the rest of the body is missing! Why is it when we receive Christ as Lord and Saviour that we don't covet the best gifts as Paul said we should in verse 31 below? Why don't we get told to ask for the best gift like to be an Apostle or a prophet or a teacher? Why do we always get told just to ask for the gift of tongues (languages) which Paul puts right at the bottom of the list? Where does the Bible say we should ask just and always for the gift of tongues? What good is the real gift of tongues anyway if we have nobody to witness to in that language as

at Pentecost? Since the Church is established in all nations, it is by far the least important gift.

By now it should be very apparent that the teaching that you are not saved or do not have the Holy Spirit unless you have the gift of tongues is faulty and there is NO valid scriptural support for it at all. Paul informs us that we could have any one of the above gifts when the Holy Spirit indwells us. NOTE: Tongues is last, it is at the bottom of the list and should be the last gift we ask for, not the first as it is in many Churches today. If we continue to make tongues first and number one gift then we are NOT following the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 "...you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." Note what Paul is saying in the above verses. Do all speak in tongues? Paul's obvious answer is No. He says to covet earnestly the best gifts.

Does Paul say glossolalia can be heavenly languages?



1 Corinthians 14 is the only chapter in the Bible that specifically deals with tongue speaking. If the passages in Acts were the only references to glossolalia, there would be no grounds for controversy over speaking in tongues as we see it in the Church today. Paul's letter to the Corinthians contains passages that have obviously given rise to serious misunderstandings. So what was the tongue speaking issue at Corinth? Corinth was an ancient trading city re-founded by Julius Caesar as a Roman colony in 46 B.C. and so its citizens were Roman but the many other nations were also equally well represented. The city of Corinth was famous for its two international seaports and it soon became a major crossroads of Mediterranean commerce explaining why the emperor must have selected it to be the Roman capital of the province of Achaia. It soon became apparent to Paul that its Church services among other things had become chaotic and confusing. While Paul was at Philippi, the first signs of trouble among his newly created congregation in Corinth reached him. Chloe was the first one to break the distressing news to him and soon after by letter. (1 Corinthians 1:11 and 7:1) Paul had been made aware that the Church formed during his second missionary journey had fallen into a bad state of spiritual decomposition. The record of flagrant abuses of Christian living submitted to him must have indeed been very distressing. Paul must have been shocked when confronted with the reports.

There was a multitude of issues, for example, gross division among the Christians with envying and strife. Paul bluntly refers to the Corinthians as carnal babes in Christ still only capable of being fed on milk and not solid food (1 Corinthians 3:1-3);

they were associating with people that were sexually immoral, idolaters, drunkards, extortioners and covetous (1 Corinthians 5:11); they were themselves fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortioners (1 Corinthians 6:9-10); there were many heresies among them (1 Corinthians 11:19); they were attending church intoxicated (1 Corinthians 11:20-22); there were abuses of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27-30); they were ignorant of natural and spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1); love and charity was apparently lacking among them (1 Corinthians 13). Things in the Church were being done in confusion and a disorderly manner especially in regards to the gift of tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40); Paul exhorts again and again that the gifts of the spirit are only to edify the Church (1 Corinthians 12:7) and not the individual. (1 Corinthians 14:3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26); he had to use lengthy and detailed explanations on how speaking in a foreign language others did not understand is worthless to others, (1 Corinthians 14:2, 6-11, 14-16, 19) as only God and himself understands. (1 Corinthians 14:28); Paul rebukes them constantly not to speak unless everyone understands the language or someone interprets into the language spoken by the Church. (1 Corinthians 14:5, 13, 26, 27, 28); he also explains that if someone unlearned comes into the Church and hears one person speaking his language or someone interprets that it would be a sign to that unbeliever (1 Corinthians 14:22) but when many people are speaking different foreign languages at the same time and with no interpreter that they would think they are mad (why wouldn't they?) (1 Corinthians 14:23); there was denial of the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12).

As you can see, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is one of constant correction and rebuke. Imagine the chaos within the Corinthian church. One group speaking different foreign languages, others trying to propagate a new doctrine, others claiming to have a revelation or to interpret tongues while perhaps a few true Christians prayed in quiet meditation. Spiritual chaos like this can never be edifying and his rebuke, "let all things be done unto edifying" was very necessary. The situation confronting Paul unquestionably turned unbelievers away from the church thinking they were mad and this was to be avoided at all cost. This is why Paul continually warns that if they speak in a tongue (language) that was not known to the majority, they should remain silent unless there was someone there to interpret or translate. See verse 28 below. In other words don't speak in a language that your audience does not understand. Listen to Paul's clear statements in the following verses:

1 Corinthians 14:6-9, 19, 27-28, 40 "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? 7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? 9 So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue

words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for you shall speak into the air. 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. 27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order”

How do Christians use this passage to explain the unintelligible babble that takes place during services today? Paul is not introducing some “new” gift of tongues in chapter 14. It is a rebuke for the misuse of the gift. Again the clear Word of God is being ignored. Paul also specifically warns us not to do this in 1 Timothy 6:20, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings...”

In other words, the very purpose for the gift of speech is to communicate your thoughts and prayers. If those present do not understand your communication, then keep silent. Why is it when those who teach speaking in tongues as we see it today go to other countries to do some form of mission work that they have to learn the language?

The belief of there being a heavenly prayer language comes mainly from 1 Corinthians 14:14 where Paul says, “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.”

This is interpreted by some to mean that when Paul prayed in the Spirit, he used a “heavenly tongue” and did not himself know what he was praying. First of all, this raises an important question. How would they ever know if their prayer was answered? What would be the point? Does God’s own Spirit just pray to Himself as some would imply?

So what is Paul really saying in this verse? The problem in understanding this verse comes largely from the issue of the awkward translation of Greek to English. Please allow me to rearticulate this verse in modern English, “If I pray in a language those around me do not know, I might be praying with the Spirit, but my thoughts would be unfruitful for those listening.” Paul is constantly putting forward the same message which is, if we pray out loud, we should either pray so others around us can understand or we should remain quiet.

The next two verses shed a lot more light and clarify the whole issue, 1 Corinthians 14:15-16 “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16 Else when you shall bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at your giving of thanks, seeing he

understandeth not what you sayest?"

According to these verses, who is it that has the problem with understanding? It is actually the listener and not the speaker as is commonly taught. Note carefully Paul's words. He says he prays and sings with his spirit and he prays with understanding. He continues to explain that when you go to bless those in the room with the spirit that are unlearned (they don't understand the language) they cannot say Amen because they don't understand that language. Paul plainly states that he knows what he is saying. If you have ever had someone pray for you in their native language that you don't understand, then you will know what Paul meant when he said, it is difficult for you to say "Amen" (meaning "so be it") when you do not know what is being prayed.

Without an interpreter, you have no idea what was said and you may be saying "so be it" to a blessing from the devil as far as you know. This passage also sheds some light on 1 Corinthians 14:2,

"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

It is obvious from the context of chapter 14 that the purpose of speaking in tongues, or foreign languages, is to communicate the Gospel and thereby edify the church. If the listeners do not understand the spoken language they cannot be edified. Consequently, if there is no interpreter, the speaker is simply speaking into the air and the only ones present who know what is being said are God and himself.

With the modern day version of speaking in tongues no one understands what is being said including the speaker. This is obviously not the case with Paul who has already made it clear that he understands what he is saying. Continuing on from 1 Corinthians 14:15-16, Paul says in verses 17 and 18, "For you verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. 18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all:"

Did you catch that last bit? Paul says he thanks God that he speaks in more tongues than them all. If Paul did not understand what he was saying as is the phenomenon of speaking in tongues today, how does he know how many tongues (languages) he speaks? See the Bible Commentaries on the final page for more information.

Does Paul contradict himself on Tongues?

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:22 that tongues are a sign for the unbeliever, but in the very next verse he says that if an unbeliever entered the Church where those present were speaking in tongues, he says won't they say you are mad?

1 Corinthians 14:22 reads, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe,

but to them that believe not... 23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

Let me give you two examples to show what Paul is saying here and that he does not contradict himself;

1) In this example and for the purpose of demonstration we will say Paul is referring to languages not known to any man. What is the difference of one person speaking in an unknown language that he and the one or more unbelievers do not understand (verse 22) compared to a whole Church that has come together in one place speaking in unknown languages simultaneously as one or more unbelievers enter the Church? (verse 23) There is no difference as it will sound like gibberish to the unbelievers in either situation and they will think you are mad. This incorrect explanation of this passage makes verses 22 and 23 appear to contradict each other.

2) In this example we will say known foreign languages are spoken as it was at Pentecost. What is the difference now of one person given the gift of speaking the native tongue of unbelievers listening versus a whole Church coming together in one place all speaking different foreign languages simultaneously? The first situation resembles that at Pentecost where they spoke in the native tongues of the unbelievers which was a sign to them and 3000 people were added to the Church instantly as a result. But imagine a Church full of people given the gift of speaking foreign languages and all speaking simultaneously. When an unbeliever walks into the Church and hears many foreign languages spoken all at the same time, it will still sound like gibberish and they will say you are mad as Paul said. As you can see the second example makes perfect sense when it lines up with the gift of tongues as it was given at Pentecost which was foreign languages.

Unintelligible ecstatic utterances miss the basic Scriptural logic for the gift of tongues. Tongue speaking in foreign languages was Babel reversed. Genesis 11:1-9 explains that as the human race repopulated the earth after the flood, they still spoke one language. Instead of migrating throughout the earth, mankind estranged from God came together to build the city of Babel with its tower to reach heaven. This was to be a monument to man's united ability. But from God's perspective, it was a monument of sinful man's unity to perform every evil imagination. For their eternal welfare it was better that they be scattered to minimize the effect of sin upon each other. To accomplish this, God "confounded their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." (Genesis 11:7) This was the beginning of diversified languages. The picture changed however, when the Gospel (meaning good news) was to be proclaimed throughout the world but there was a problem. There was a language barrier. God by the gift of tongues bridged the language barrier invoked at Babel so now the Gospel would reconcile His people and could be proclaimed to every nation. The apostles and other disciples evangelized the Roman World by the gift of tongues, the ability to speak in other foreign languages. The

whole scriptural logic of Babel and the proclamation of the Gospel is lost if tongue speaking is unintelligible syllables. If the gift of tongue speaking today is ecstatic utterances, then what an absolute waste. Why are the tongues you see in the Church today given so freely just for your own personal use, while missionaries who truly need the gift to spread the Gospel have to almost always learn the language? Something is dreadfully wrong here!

1 Corinthians 14:19-20 reveals the Corinthians abused the gift of tongues. They were like little children with a new toy and wanted to show off. At their Church services they exhorted in tongues (verse 23) and they prayed in tongues (verses 13-17) without any interpretation. This edified no one (verses 5, 12, 17, 26). Hence Paul's reprimand;

1 Corinthians 14:19-20 "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. 20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

Note Paul's phrase "that by my voice I might teach others ALSO." This shows when Paul spoke in an understandable language he taught himself and "others also" and consequently, if he spoke in tongues (foreign languages) he only taught himself. The thought is that when speaking in tongues, he comprehended what he was saying. This is not the case with ecstatic utterances today where those who speak in tongues do not comprehend what they are saying. 1 Corinthians 14:9-11 provides further proof that Paul is speaking of foreign languages and not ecstatic utterances. In dealing with the problem of tongues Paul said,

"So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words [rational sounds] easy to be understood [a common language], how shall it be known what is spoken? for you shall speak into the air [in vain]. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices [articulate speech] in the world, [notice Paul is not talking about so called "heavenly languages" but voices in the world, NOT heaven] and none of them is without signification [each national language has its distinct meaning]. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian [foreigner] unto me."

The Greek word "barbaros" means "a foreigner (that is, non Greek): - barbarian (-rous)." Paul is saying that an unknown voice or tongue would sound like a barbarian meaning the language of a foreigner. Notice how the NIV and many other Bibles translate the word "barbaros."

1 Corinthians 14:11 "If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me."

The logic of 1 Corinthians 14:9-11 is only meaningful if speaking in tongues is foreign languages and not ecstatic utterances.

The tongues spoken of in the early Church were always known by someone in the world. The term “unknown” in chapter 14 does not appear in the original Greek. It has been added by the translators which is why the KJV Bible has the word “unknown” printed in light grey and in italics. This is to inform the reader that these words have been added and are not in the original text. The translators of the KJV Bible are trying to give clarity to the reader by telling them that Paul is talking of an unknown language to the listeners, not a language unknown to man. Unfortunately, it appears that the translators have accomplished just the opposite!

SPEAKING IN TONGUES — LINGUISTIC STUDY

In a massive study of tongue speaking from a linguistic perspective by Professor William J. Samarin of the University of Toronto's Department of Linguistics, published after more than a decade of careful research, he rejected the view that glossolalia is xenoglossia, i.e. some foreign language that could be understood by another person who knew that language. Professor Samarin concluded that glossolalia is a “pseudo-language.” He defined glossolalia as “unintelligible babbling speech that exhibits superficial phonological similarity to language, without having consistent syntagmatic structure and that is not systematically derived from or related to known language.” (William J. Samarin, “Variation and Variables in Religious Glossolalia,” *Language in Society*, ed. Dell Haymes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972 pages. 121-130)

Felicitas D. Goodman, a psychological anthropologist and linguist, engaged in a study of various English, Spanish and Mayan speaking Pentecostal communities in the United States and Mexico. She compared tape recordings of non-Christian rituals from Africa, Borneo, Indonesia and Japan as well. She published her results in 1972 in an extensive monograph (*Speaking in Tongues: A Cross-Cultural Study in Glossolalia* by Felicitas D. Goodman, University of Chicago Press, 1972).

Felicitas Goodman concludes that “when all features of speaking in tongues were taken into consideration, which is the segmental structure (such as sounds, syllables, phrases) and its suprasegmental elements (namely, rhythm, accent, and especially overall intonation), she concluded that there is no distinction in tongues between Christians and the followers of non-Christian (pagan) religions. Goodman in the prestigious *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (1987) wrote the “association between trance and glossolalia is now accepted by many researchers as a correct assumption”. Goodman also concludes that glossolalia “is, actually, a learned behaviour, learned either unwarily or, sometimes consciously.” Others have previously pointed out that direct instruction is given on how to “speak in tongues,” ie. how to engage in glossolalia. In fact, it has been found that the “speaking in tongues” practiced in Christian churches and by individual Christians is identical to the chanting language

of those who practice voodoo on the darkest continents of this world.

Some who speak in tongues are also becoming involved in “holy laughter, drunk in the spirit” laughing uncontrollably, falling down on the ground, rolling around, having seizure like activity, being struck dumb, or being “slain in the spirit.” Jesus never behaved that way, nor did He heal that way. The only time you see anything that resembles that behaviour in the Bible is with demon possessed people Jesus delivered that were out of control, writhing on the ground. When Jesus cast out the demons and delivered them, they sat quietly with dignity. 1 Corinthians 14:40 says, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” The Bible never demonstrates such disorderly behaviour in the Church.

Very few people realize the tremendous forces locked within our emotional nature. Some are more susceptible than others. With the correct environment, the long hours of praying for one thing, the music, sobs, entreaties of those around, the mind becomes weary and the emotions take over. The effects can be dramatic, almost overwhelming. This can be so even when glossolalia appears outside the necessity of such emotional props.

Glossolalia has even been manufactured by University students in America (some of whom were atheist and had no religious interest at all) as a demonstration of what can happen given the right emotional environment and the right emotional effort. To quote one example, in Geelong, Victoria, Australia, two men as an experiment (again apart from religion) spoke in tongues after repeating “Timbucktoo” in the right emotional setting. One in just a few minutes and one partly after two hours! (Modern New Tongues” p. 59 – A.S. Hill).

Its universal appeal can be seen in its evidence amongst both Catholics and Protestants, Christian and Heathen, those living good moral lives, those living in sin. All can, and do, experience this phenomenon. That in these conditions “Tongues” CANNOT be a sign of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit becomes immediately evident.

Healing services and glossolalia have been, and possibly still are, being conducted in the Catholic University of Notre Dame (Christianity Today:, p.40, May 26, 1967.) And so it does not matter whether a person is a Catholic believing in the Pope, or a Protestant, a Christian or heathen. Living a good life or living in adultery, believing in baptism by immersion, or sprinkling, smokers or non-smokers. Drinkers or teetotallers, believing in the Virgin Birth or scoffing at the idea – it makes no difference. All speak with “Tongues!” Obviously the tongues are not self-authenticating. There is no sign here of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or of anything else.

There have been instances of real foreign languages being spoken in meetings as fun or as an experiment and invariably receiving an “interpretation” wholly at conflict

with what had been said! A young Dutch person entered a Pentecostal Assembly recently and rattled off a Dutch fairy story receiving an interpretation that God was asking the assembly to pray for the poor in China! A tape recording of glossolalia will receive totally different interpretations from those purporting to have the gift of interpreting. This is all very sad.

Another aspect that is very noticeable is that an English Pentecostal speaking in tongues, though it may be quite unintelligible, is still recognizably English in intonation and syllable construction. Essentially he is still speaking "English." So also with other nationals. A Scotchman is still "Scottish." A Frenchman still is "French" in intonations and syllable construction. Obviously, however sincere these people are, the whole thing becomes a sham and a fraud. Many become victims of their own emotions "aided by the great deceiver."

It is clear Pentecostals, which we once were, have no right at all to use the term "Pentecostal" for at Pentecost real recognizable languages were spoken whereas amongst so-called "Pentecostals" this never happens.

Pentecostals and others engaging in tongue speaking as seen today normally say any or all of the following;

1. Tongues are a sign of Baptism in the Holy Spirit – but the Bible never says that.
2. All should speak in tongues – but the Bible never says that.
3. The initial experience of tongue speaking at the Baptism is different from the later "gift of tongues" – but the Bible never says that.
4. The tongues are, or can be a heavenly language – but the Bible never says that.
5. Tongue speaking is for the benefit of believers – but the Bible never says that.
6. Tongue speaking is for the most part unintelligible – but the Bible never says that.
7. These unintelligible tongues are Christian – but the Bible and history indicate that they are heathen.

The tongue speaking movement is bringing into its arms of influence both Roman Catholics and Protestant Churches. In other words you will find the emphasis in the Catholic Church just as strong as in the Protestant and evangelical Protestant churches and the more stable Protestant Churches, i.e. Anglican Churches,

Methodist churches as well as the Pentecostal type churches as Apostolic. Right through Christendom today you've got a cross-section all claiming the gift of tongues and the gift of healing. All these Churches, Catholic Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, and Liberal Protestant all claim the gift of tongues. This is evidence that the tongues they are speaking are the counterfeit. The Bible says that when the Holy Spirit comes into a person's life it leads him into all truth, according to John 16. He will guide us, it says, into all truth. Catholics say when they have the gift of tongues it helps them to better appreciate the Virgin Mary and the infallibility of the pope. It helps them better in their confessional to the priests. Now doesn't that immediately confirm something? Do you mean to say that the Holy Spirit when it comes into your life is going to help us believe in the Blessed Virgin Mary more, it's going to help us believe in a counterfeit religion? All the Protestant churches with exactly the same gift of tongues believe it helps them to accept Jesus and His sacrifice more. If it's supposed to be the same spirit there's a problem isn't there? It is clearly evident that it's a spirit alright, but it's not the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit, when it comes guides us and leads us into all truth, not just some of the truth.

A DEADLY GIFT FROM THE ENEMY

The purpose of tongues is clearly taught in Acts 2 but where is the clear teaching for what takes place in the Church today? Those who practice what we see today, make assumptions taken from Paul's rebuke to the Corinthians for the misuse of tongues. Paul does not condemn the basic experience but a study of this New Testament phenomenon does not furnish us with indications that the gift of tongues had undergone a modification and had been changed with God's sanction from a manifestation of speaking real languages as in Acts 2 to an unintelligible tongue by the time the Corinthians were using it. To the contrary, it is reasonable to assume that when Paul established the church at Corinth that its members received the gift of tongues so that they would be able to reach out to the multitude of foreigners and resident aliens in their own language.

Not one single person in nineteen centuries, including all the protestant reformers of which some had the Bible memorized from cover to cover, or any theologian ever interpreted any part of the Bible as saying there was another version of tongues such as what entered the Church in 1901. It was after this practice (previously only seen in rare isolated incidences and non-Christian cults) entered the Church that people searched for scriptures they could use to justify this practice that has spread like a plague through the Church today that many just take for granted. There are so many good Christians that feel the need for such signs and wonders and cannot accept the feelings they experience are not from God and would rather find some way of justifying the practice in their own mind than let it go even though it is not from God. Some have even experienced healing using this practice which Satan is more than capable of doing in order to deceive and draw people in.

In this World today filled with terrorism and crime, we should all be aware that a gift

from an enemy can be very deadly. The underworld has successfully dispatched many human targets by beautifully wrapping a bomb as a gift with an ornate bow and paper that explodes when opened. Today the devil is using a counterfeit gift of the Spirit. A pagan form of the gift of tongues to gain access to the church of God and destroy it from within and most Christians never give this a thought. No one is ever told that what they practice in the Church today is also practiced by those who practice voodoo. If what is spoken in the Church today is and sounds identical to non-Christian religions then why are we still practicing it? As you have seen, the scriptural support for it is faulty and misunderstood. Why are Christians taking part in these non-Christian, religious pagan traditions?

EARLY AND MODERN CHURCH SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Observe from the table below the differences of tongue speaking in the early Church verses the Church today. With glossolalia today, there are just no similarities at all; in fact they are exact opposites.

Early Church Tongue Speaking	Modern Church Tongue Speaking
The least important gift. 1 Corinthians 14:5, 12:27-31	The most important and only sought after gift.
Sign to unbelievers. 1 Corinthians 14:22	A Sign to believers.
Spoken in turn. 1 Corinthians 14:27	Spoken together in confusion.
If no interpreter keep silent. 1 Corinthians 14:28	Rarely an interpreter and almost always proven false.
Pray for interpretation. 1 Corinthians 14:13	Pray for speaking in tongues.
Only one interpretation.	Interpretations differ when put to the test.
To edify the Church. 1 Corinthians 14:26	To edify yourself.
Spoke a known language. Acts 2:4-11	Almost never a known language.
Accusation of madness. 1 Corinthians 14:23	No accusation of madness.
Spoken for the benefit of hearers. 1 Corinthians 14:9	Spoken for the benefit of the speaker.
Maximum of 3 to speak per meeting. 1 Corinthians 14:27	Whole Church freely speaks with no interpretation.
Interpret so everyone understands. 1 Corinthians 14:16	Interpretation almost never done today.

ARE THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT STILL GIVEN TODAY?

The gifts of the Spirit are for the benefit and growth of God's kingdom. Do we still need that today? Of course. So are the gifts still given today? Absolutely, they are still

in need today as they were in the early Church. However, the gift of tongues today is not anywhere near as prevalent as in the early Church. God gives all the gifts of the Spirit to fill a practical need. What was the need for tongues? Why did the Lord wait until Pentecost to bestow the gift of tongues? Acts 2:5-11 sets the scene,

"Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs, we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

The day of Pentecost was a Jewish holy day that fell fifty days after Passover. Devoted Israelites would come from all over the Roman Empire to worship in Jerusalem. God chose this timely opportunity to bestow the gift of tongue speaking upon the disciples so they could preach to the visiting Jews in their native languages. At least 15 different language groups were represented in the crowd that day, count them in Acts 2:9-11. As a result, thousands of these visitors were converted. After Pentecost, they in turn carried their new faith home to their respective countries. This is God's purpose for speaking in tongues. Some say genuine tongues have already ceased but I have heard of some isolated cases of legitimate tongue speaking today and the speaker always knew what they were saying as they did at Pentecost. We must not go by our thoughts and emotions. Some continue to say, "How can this amazing sensation not be from God?" But Satan can give us those same feelings and those in voodoo and other satanic cults say they experience these identical ecstatic feelings. So what does that tell you? In order that we are not deceived, it is imperative that we follow God's Word alone.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES COMMENTARY AND CONCLUSION

As previously stated, the main scriptures that are used to justify tongues as seen in paganism and non-Christian cults which made its way into the Church in 1901, come from 1 Corinthians 14. Below is the whole chapter minus the issue of woman speaking in the Church with commentary included in parenthesis. A close and open minded look at chapter fourteen reveals that Paul is not teaching a "new" variation of tongues but is constantly pointing out that speaking in tongues is of no value unless understood by the Church and so continually pushes the use of the better gift of prophesying instead. This is further demonstrated by what Paul said in the following verse. Note Paul places prophets 2nd after apostles and tongues last in 8th position.

1 Corinthians 12:28 "And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues."

After a careful study of the chapter below it should become very apparent that Paul constantly demonstrates that the gifts are to be used for edifying the Church. He never teaches that the gifts are for private use.

1 Corinthians 12:7 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:"

Note how Paul rebukes the disorder and misuse of tongues. By continual examples he shows that tongues are valueless unless understood and would rather they prophesy so the Church is edified. The emphasis is on;

1. Edifying the Church. (highest priority) No edification in disorder.
2. Prophecy second as it is the better gift for edification of the Church.
3. Silence on tongues (foreign languages) unless understood or translated. (otherwise no edification)

Speaking in tongues after all is only the gift of speaking another foreign language. It is still the speaker giving his own personal message. Prophecy on the other hand is a message from God for the Church. How much more valuable is that!? Paul does not forbid the use of tongues from up to three people, one at a time if someone interprets, but a message from God is far more valuable to the Church. So Paul's constant emphasis is silence on tongues unless the Church is edified by being understood by natural means or translation.

UNKNOWN TONGUE SPEAKING BY COMMENTARY

1 Corinthians 14:1-33, 39-40 "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. (Prophecy edifies the Church more than the other gifts. Paul's constant emphasis is edifying others and NOT yourself. See verses 3,4,5,12,17 and 26)

2. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue (foreign language) speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. (By your own spirit or by the power of the Holy spirit you are only speaking mysteries to those listening if the language is not understood by the others present. Therefore only God and the speaker know what is being said. See also verse 28. The word "tongue" (glossa) is the same word as used in Acts chapter 2, 10 and 19 to describe a real intelligible foreign language. The word "unknown" in this chapter is supplied by the translators and is shown in italics to tell us that it is not in the original Greek text. The translators of the KJV Bible are trying to clarify to the reader that Paul is talking of an unknown language to the listeners, not a language unknown to man. Unfortunately, it appears that the translators have accomplished just the opposite)

3. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and

comfort. (Again Paul emphasizes prophesying as the better gift to edify the Church)

4. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue (foreign language) edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. (Paul said the gifts of the spirit are for the "profit of all" and NOT the individual [1 Corinthians 12:7] and so points out tongues i.e. a foreign language the listeners don't know can only edify yourself (wrong use) and not the Church but prophesying does edify and is a better gift. See verse 1,3,5 and 39. Paul is presenting a wrong and a right use of the gifts. One edifies the Church the other does not)

5. I would that ye all spake with tongues, (foreign languages) but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, (foreign languages) except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. (Paul is happy for them to all speak in tongues i.e. foreign languages if the language is understood by others or it is translated but would still prefer that they prophesied because there is much greater edification from that gift)

6. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, (foreign languages) what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? (And again the same message. If the language is not understood there is no edification. Paul had the power of speaking many foreign languages [verse 18] but he did not use this power for ostentation or display, but merely to communicate the gospel to those who did not understand his native tongue)

7. And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? (Paul continues to express the uselessness of tongue speaking i.e. foreign languages not understood by others. It is the same message over and over. All things are to be done to the edification of the Church)

8. For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (The trumpet must be blown in a way that will be recognized as a call to battle and so in the same way tongues must also be understood and recognized so people will know how to respond and be edified)

9. So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. (And still even further emphasis that tongue speaking is of no value unless understood by the Church. Words no matter how sincere and spiritual are lost into the air if not spoken so those around understand)

10. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. (There are many foreign languages in the world (NOT heaven)

all which are important to someone. Note Paul is not talking about so called "heavenly languages" but voices of different languages in the world)

11. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. (All other nations of the world were barbarians to the Hebrews and of course spoke other languages. Paul is saying that one who speaks a foreign language not known by the listener may as well be a barbarian to him)

12. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. (At the risk of sounding monotonous, Paul continues to emphasize edification. As much as the Corinthians desired spiritual gifts, they must excel in using them to edify the Church only. They are not for the individual)

13. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue (foreign language) pray that he may interpret. (Therefore the person with the gift of tongue speaking must have someone interpret if the others do not understand the language so the Church is edified. See also verses 5,26,27 and 28)

14. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, (foreign language) my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. (Paul is saying if he prays in a language those around him do not know, he might be praying fervently and by his own spirit but his thoughts would be unfruitful for those listening. This of course is a violation of the purpose of the gift which is to edify others)

15. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. (Paul also clarifies that his prayer or song IS done with his understanding. It is the listener who does not understand)

16. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? (Paul continues to explain the previous two verses as to how his prayer does not edify the others and they cannot say Amen or "so be it" if the other does not know what the person prayed. Without an interpreter, you have no idea what was said and you may be saying "so be it" to a blessing from the devil for all you know)

17. For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. (Paul still continues to give the same message of edifying others and not yourself. The prayer is useless as the other is not edified)

18. I thank my God, I speak with tongues (foreign languages) more than ye all: (Paul says he speaks more foreign languages than all the Corinthians which he could only know if he understood what he was saying. This gives more proof that his references

to tongues here are known foreign languages. The context never changes)

19. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. (Note Paul's phrase "that by my voice I might teach others ALSO." This shows when Paul spoke in an understandable language he taught himself and "others also" and consequently, if he spoke in tongues (foreign languages) he only taught himself. The thought is that when speaking in tongues, he comprehended what he was saying which is unlike today where the speaker has no idea what he is speaking. Despite Paul knowing so many foreign languages, he still points out that he would rather speak five understood words than 10,000 words in a foreign language the others do not understand)

20. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. (Paul tells them not to behave with the understanding of children but with the thinking of mature adults)

21. In the law it is written, With men of other tongues (foreign language) and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. (The law meaning Old Testament. The quote is from Isaiah 28:11-12 where God says to Israel, these people don't hear Me though I speak to them in their native tongue so I will therefore speak to them in the languages of foreigners, i.e. the enemy I will send against them; [Babylonians] but even then they will not listen to Me. Paul is telling them that God's punishment to the Israelites in making them have to listen to foreigners is what they are imposing on the Church when speaking in tongues)

22. Wherefore tongues (foreign languages) are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (It was a sign to those at Pentecost where many nations heard unlearned Galileans speaking to them in their native tongue the wonderful things of God. And as a result of this sign, 3000 people were added to the Church instantly)

23. If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, (foreign languages) and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? (Paul continues, but if an unbeliever or an unlearned person comes into a Church where many people are all speaking in tongues i.e. foreign languages at the same time and without interpretation, it would sound chaotic and they would say you were all mad)

24. But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: (But if all prophesy, the unbeliever or the unlearned will be convinced and so the Church will be edified)

25. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. (The sinner would be convinced that God alone could uncover the secrets of his heart and so would fall down on his face in worship and acknowledge that God was truly among them)

26. How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, (foreign language) hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (Paul now continues to talk about the spiritual chaos that took place in the Church. He says why is it when you come together, that at the same time one has a psalm, another a doctrine, another speaking in tongues i.e. an unknown foreign language, another speaking a revelation and another trying to give an interpretation? This chaos can not edify the Church and the unlearned will say you are mad)

27. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, (foreign language) let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. (By course, meaning one person at a time and not more than three times in one meeting with someone interpreting so all are edified)

28. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. (It does not get much clearer. All gifts are to edify the Church. If the foreign language is not known by others or there is no interpreter, then the Church is not edified, so stay SILENT)

29. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. (Everything must be done to edifying. As speaking in an unknown tongue, if another is present who can interpret, two miraculous gifts can be exercised at once and the church edified, and the faith of the hearers confirmed at the same time. As to prophesying, two or three only should speak at one meeting, and this one after the other, not all at once. See also verse 31)

30. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. (If another person has a correction or a thought to add, let common Christian courtesy prevail and wait for the first person to finish before the other person speaks. Let everything be done in order and not confusion)

31. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. (The same rules apply to tongue speaking as prophesying. Only one person to speak at a time and no more than three people per meeting)

32. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (If many are speaking in tongues and or prophesying at the same time, it will

be just utter confusion)

39. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. (Seek after the gift of prophesy first but tongue speaking is allowed providing someone interprets)

40. Let all things be done decently and in order.” (Paul’s final comment as he ends this chapter of correction and rebuke to the Corinthians for their disorderly behaviour and confusion in the Church, especially in regards to tongue speaking i.e. foreign languages)

1 CORINTHIANS 14 - CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION

Many of the misunderstandings in relation to tongues comes from the awkward translations of the KJV Bible. As already discussed the term “unknown” has further added to the confusion as it does not exist in the original Greek text. Below is 1 Corinthians 14 from the more modern CEV Bible that has greatly simplified the translation and has made it much easier to interpret what Paul was saying to the Church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 14:1-33,37-40 “Love should be your guide. Be eager to have the gifts that come from the Holy Spirit, especially the gift of prophecy. 2 If you speak languages that others don't know, God will understand what you are saying, though no one else will know what you mean. You will be talking about mysteries that only the Spirit understands. 3 But when you prophesy, you will be understood, and others will be helped. They will be encouraged and made to feel better. 4 By speaking languages that others don't know, you help only yourself. But by prophesying you help everyone in the church. 5 I am glad for you to speak unknown languages, although I had rather for you to prophesy. In fact, prophesying does much more good than speaking unknown languages, unless someone can help the church by explaining what you mean. 6 My friends, what good would it do, if I came and spoke unknown languages to you and didn't explain what I meant? How would I help you, unless I told you what God had shown me or gave you some knowledge or prophecy or teaching? 7 If all musical instruments sounded alike, how would you know the difference between a flute and a harp? 8 If a bugle call isn't clear, how would you know to get ready for battle? 9 That's how it is when you speak unknown languages. If no one can understand what you are talking about, you will only be talking to the wind. 10 There are many different languages in this world, and all of them make sense. 11 But if I don't understand the language that someone is using, we will be like foreigners to each other. 12 If you really want spiritual gifts, choose the ones that will be most helpful to the church. 13 When we speak languages that others don't know, we should pray for the power to explain what we mean. 14 For example, if I use an unknown language in my prayers, my spirit prays but my mind is useless. 15 Then what should I do? There are times when I should pray with my spirit, and times when I should pray with my mind. Sometimes I should sing with my spirit, and at other times

I should sing with my mind. 16 Suppose some strangers are in your worship service, when you are praising God with your spirit. If they don't understand you, how will they know to say, "Amen"? 17 You may be worshiping God in a wonderful way, but no one else will be helped. 18 I thank God that I speak unknown languages more than any of you. 19 But words that make sense can help the church. That's why in church I had rather speak five words that make sense than to speak ten thousand words in a language that others don't know. 20 My friends, stop thinking like children. Think like mature people and be as innocent as tiny babies. 21 In the Scriptures the Lord says, "I will use strangers who speak unknown languages to talk to my people. They will speak to them in foreign languages, but still my people won't listen to me." 22 Languages that others don't know may mean something to unbelievers, but not to the Lord's followers. Prophecy, on the other hand, is for followers, not for unbelievers. 23 Suppose everyone in your worship service started speaking unknown languages, and some outsiders or some unbelievers come in. Won't they think you are crazy? 24 But suppose all of you are prophesying when those unbelievers and outsiders come in. They will realize that they are sinners, and they will want to change their ways because of what you are saying. 25 They will tell what is hidden in their hearts. Then they will kneel down and say to God, "We are certain that you are with these people." 26 My friends, when you meet to worship, you must do everything for the good of everyone there. That's how it should be when someone sings or teaches or tells what God has said or speaks an unknown language or explains what the language means. 27 No more than two or three of you should speak unknown languages during the meeting. You must take turns, and someone should always be there to explain what you mean. 28 If no one can explain, you must keep silent in church and speak only to yourself and to God. 29 Two or three persons may prophesy, and everyone else must listen carefully. 30 If someone sitting there receives a message from God, the speaker must stop and let the other person speak. 31 Let only one person speak at a time, then all of you will learn something and be encouraged. 32 A prophet should be willing to stop and let someone else speak. 33 God wants everything to be done peacefully and in order. When God's people meet in church, 37 If you think of yourself as a prophet or a spiritual person, you will know that I am writing only what the Lord has commanded. 38 So don't pay attention to anyone who ignores what I am writing. 39 My friends, be eager to prophesy and don't stop anyone from speaking languages that others don't know. 40 But do everything properly and in order."

EXTRA READING

When God brought His chosen people out of the land of Egypt, He performed many miracles like turning Aaron's rod into a serpent, changing rivers to blood and bringing up frogs to cover the land. The pharaoh's magicians through the power of Satan were also able to counterfeit all these same miracles. (Exodus 7:10-11; 7:20-22; 8:6-7)

In Job 1:16 Satan burned up Job's sheep and servants with "fire from heaven" and in Job 1:19, Satan used a "great wind" to bring down a house killing the occupants and in Job 2:7, Satan smote Job with "sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his

crown." If Satan has power to change rods to serpents, change rivers to blood, bring up frogs to cover the land, control the weather, bring down fire from the heavens (see also Revelation 13:13) and inflict illness, then he can certainly heal people. Note Satan needed God's permission to inflict illness on Job. (Job 1:12; 2:6) So we know God heals and Satan counterfeits, God gives the gift of tongues and Satan counterfeits, God has true Prophets and Satan has counterfeit false Prophets, (Matthew 24:11) God is going to seal His people with a mark in their foreheads (Revelation 7:3) and Satan has a counterfeit mark in the forehead and hand. (Revelation 13:16)

Please allow me to ask you some thought provoking questions. If the gift of tongues which was given at Pentecost was real languages, what is Satan's counterfeit? What type of tongue speaking would be of value to Satan? Known understood languages as at Pentecost or tongues that we don't understand or know what we are saying? Which would Satan use? Would you be convinced that speaking in tongues as seen today was from God if you received healing while using them? Even though Satan would heal you while using his counterfeit tongue speaking just to deceive you into believing they were the real thing and from God? If you were the enemy with his incredible God given wisdom and power and had an army of fallen angels at your disposal, and you hated God and wanted to take as many people from the kingdom as possible, what would you do? So, do Satan and his demons sit around all day throwing an odd temptation or two into people's minds or do they have strategic long term, full scale plans and are they very actively deceiving everyone who chases after "signs and wonders" while ignoring the many warnings in the Bible?

If Satan is working towards a New World Order in preparation for the mark of the beast, what common doctrine could be used to unite the many denominations and is already doing so? How can we test the spirits here as we are instructed without any doubt of being deceived? If there were two types of tongues as some unbiblically claim, why would God give this gift so freely for personal use and almost never give the needed gift for spreading the Gospel? Which is God's priority and more important? If the unintelligible tongues spoken in Church today were from God, then He would be giving the needed gift even more freely to missionaries but this is not the case. This is not the nature and priority of God. In Matthew 24:5 and verse 11, Jesus says "many" will be deceived. The many spoken of here means a large number. Here is the Thayer Definition: "polus / polos" 1) many, much, large. Please don't be part of this large number of people is my prayer for you.

Matthew 16:4 Jesus said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

Section Six

Entertainment and the Media

A striking question from the masses often posed to a Christian concerning Entertainment and the Media is usually an inquisition concerning the Biblical principles to follow when it comes to Christian Entertainment. This is a very relevant question today, especially when you consider that with the onset of the internet, smartphones, animated billboards, and HDTVs, the average person must swim through a constant waterfall of entertainment advertisements daily. There has never been a time in history when a Christian's senses have been assaulted by worldly media as they are this century.

We need to be aware, then, that the Bible standard is very high. In Philippians 4:8, we read, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

If you apply these criteria to what you're watching, reading, and hearing, you will be following the very best counsel available. Is your choice of entertainment elevating? Is it noble? Is it true? These are some of the tests that Paul applies regarding how we determine what we choose to think about and subject our minds to.

King David writes in Psalm 101:3, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." When we follow this as a guideline, we're more likely to choose activities that nurture the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Obviously, all Christians recognize that it's a sin to lie, kill, steal, or commit adultery, but somehow when it comes to being entertained by watching or reading about others breaking these commandments, we manage to rationalize that it's okay. Really? Paul says the "righteous judgment of God" will fall on those who not only do these things but also on those who "approve of those who practice them" as recorded in Romans 1:32. In other words, many Christians choose to sin vicariously by being entertained by the sins of others, real or imagined.

No one can escape the truth that we are changed by what we behold. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, we read, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the

Lord.” As we worship and look to Jesus, we become like Him. As we worship and look to the world, we will become like the world.

Ultimately, this is the bottom line. “What would Jesus do?” What would He watch, what would He read, and what would He listen to? If He suddenly walked into your room, would you quickly change the channel, slip that novel under your pillow, or delete your browser history? Actually, He and His angels are there now, so these are very good questions to ask yourself in every situation.

A Christian is a follower of Christ, so Jesus' example should be foremost in our minds and hearts. The only way to really find that out is to study to know Him better through your Bible. We are told in Philippians 2:5, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

So, as a good practicing Christian, you wouldn't go to a séance and it would probably be safe to say that you wouldn't play with a Ouija board, right? You don't consult magicians and sorcerers but could it be possible that you do engage in these activities simply by being a passive observer. Are you participating in these forbidden practices by taking pleasure in them?

Since the dawn of Cinema, the Hollywood industry has been a spiritualism peddling machine. Today, it's so commonplace that most people don't even bat an eye. I'm sure there's a lot of well-meaning Christians who have seen their fair share of occult movies despite them having questionably dark themes. Many of these films even go as far to reveal there's a great battle between light and darkness yet for a lot of sincere Christians there seems to be a disconnect between what the Bible warns against and one's appetite for entertainment. There has been an increase of supernatural elements in movies in recent years and it seems to be the main ingredient. By constant exposure, you become desensitized to it and therefore familiar with the dark spiritual underworld.

The infiltration of Masonic and Occult practices in the Entertainment industry and the Media is evident in how music and movies are being used as avenues that pull people into conceiving Satanist ideas through hypnosis. Hollywood celebrities seem to be gods that influence the masses due to their popularity that sprouts from the themes in their music and movies which are appealing to the worldly lusts of the flesh. Many entertainment companies spend billions of money to make movies, video games and songs that have an occultic worldly appeal that lures the masses into supporting them by their time and attention since hypnotism has become the order of the day.

Television is one of the most effective hypnotic tools out there. It can have a huge influence on the way you think, the beliefs that you hold and consequently how your life turns out. Your subconscious mind, which carries all your memories and beliefs

and makes you who you are, is directly programmed by watching television. In the flicker-induced hypnotic state caused by television watching, your mind slips into the hypnotic trance within seconds of watching TV. This lowers your frontal lobe brainwaves from the “beta state” to a lower “alpha state” commonly associated with deep relaxation. This is caused by the screen flicker and explains why you feel sleepy after sometime while watching TV.

Under this state of trance, your subconscious mind becomes highly suggestible and whatever information you receive from the TV becomes part of your memory pool. Since beliefs are nothing but memories, this information has the tendency to alter your beliefs or form new ones when it seeps into your subconscious mind. You might think the remote is in your hand and you're watching the programs but, in truth, you are the one who is getting programmed. This is the principle the entertainment industry uses to make you have the urge to watch more movies that corrupt your mind. The same principle also applies to video games.

Some of the major entertainment companies include:

1. Walt Disney Company which owns Marvel Studios, Lucasfilm, Pixar, Fox Family, Fox Animation, Twentieth Century Fox and Fox Searchlight Pictures.
2. Warner Brothers Entertainment Company which owns DC Comics, New Line Cinema, Warner Home Video, Telepictures, DC Films, Warner Animation Group and Monolith Pictures.
3. Comcast-NBC Universal which owns Universal Studios, Illumination and DreamWorks Animation and
4. National Amusements which owns Paramount Pictures and Viacom Media Networks, which is the parent of Nickelodeon and MTV.

A review of these Entertainment firms clearly shows their intent in making of the so-called “popular films” and how they affect our lives, particularly our spirituality. First on the list is Disney.

Disney is a mastermind when it comes to creating seemingly family-friendly products, whether it's a film or a cartoon or an amusement park. Disney has convinced the masses that it's simply good clean fun. But at a closer examination something more sinister is underneath that innocent persona, a dark force not to be trifled with. Disney has never been shy to showcase occult things and it seems that most of the content aimed at the young is becoming blatantly evil. Most of the Disney movies glamorizes being evil and makes it fashionable. One of the things often glamorized is sorcery and witchcraft. The Bible is very clear about sorcery and witchcraft and

warns us to have nothing to do with it. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 18:10-12 "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

On this verse alone, Christians have no business watching any of these films that contain the very elements that are an abomination to God.

According to the Disney Wiki, magic is used throughout all of the Disney Universe. A concept of the morality of magic according to the Disney Wiki is how it's used. Some use it for good and others for evil. Here are the types of magic that are used in Disney films: witchcraft, sorcery, voodoo, dragon magic and fairy magic. The Disney Universe beholds a number of magic users coming in all shapes and sizes. There are some who use magic for good and benevolent purposes and others for wicked and selfish or fiendish goals. There are some that are indifferent to good and evil and thus use magic for their own reasons regardless of good or evil. But once again, the Bible is very clear, we are to have nothing to do with these things, period. In fact, the Bible describes these practices as an abomination to the Lord. The Bible says in Leviticus 20:6 "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people."

Also in one of these Disney films, you'd hear a character say, "No right, no wrong, no rules for me, I'm free." This is the most dangerous philosophy to plant in the children's minds. Aleister Crowley, a Luciferian and a Satanist once said, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." This provides the basis of the law in Satanism or any occultic secret society. The Ten Commandments are our only guide for right and wrong. Where there is no rules, there is only chaos. In another film you'd hear a character say, "Doesn't it feel so good to be bad" and everybody is cheering. The Bible says in Isaiah 5:20 "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Glorifying evil and making it look appealing is exactly how the devil tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. Most of these examples I've outlined have made the devil the attractive Saviour. If you spend countless hours watching these types of films, animations and cartoons, the chances are that your desire for Christ's righteousness will be tainted. The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of

those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

By beholding, we become changed. These things are truly sugarcoating the occult and when we watch these things we take on their characteristics.

Marvel studios, a subsidiary of Disney, has succeeded in planting occultic and spiritualistic themes in the minds of many people. Take for example, the ever increasing popular comic film series "The Avengers." It's a non-stop mix of supernatural power and sorcery that dazzles the senses. If you ask fans how they receive these box office giants, they will respond with overwhelming awe that they receive incredible entertainment from these films. Examples of such characters in these marvel films include figures such as Thor, Ironman, Deadpool, Spiderman, Ant-man, Doctor Strange and Captain America. These films promote concepts such as Alchemy (the mixing of science and magic), Norse mythology through the movie Thor and majorly the Greek philosophies through Greek mythology unveiled in an encoded state. In fact, these movies have completely changed the ideological purpose of the plan of redemption and distorted the real image of Lucifer and his fall. This is shown by the fact that the one portrayed to have been cast out of the Heavenly realms later becomes the saviour of humankind. This is contrary to what is taught in the Holy Scriptures. Such ideas are promoted in the film Thor and the film series "The Avengers."

Warner Brothers Company that produces DC Comics and Marvel Studios have one thing in common. They both embrace the use of supernatural elements in movies a main ingredient in making their characters who are often portrayed as superheroes. These superheroes aren't just made, they have backstories, reasons as to why they become heroes. In this case their creators usually have some kind of inspiration, some base to work off on some already existing idea that they can put their own spin on. The inspiration behind most of the superheroes in films and comics is the Greco-Roman pantheon and Greek mythology. The movie producers change their heroes enough so that it's not noticeable, but if you really think about it the parallels become obvious. The main gods and goddesses of the Greek mythology often used as a depiction of superheroes include Heracles, Daedalus, Zeus, Hades, Poseidon, Hera, Apollo and Hermes.

Captain America could be regarded as super patriotic Heracles. As Heracles had his shield that embodied events of the Olympics, Captain America has a shield that embodies the country he fights for. Heracles is the only human that became god according to Greek mythology, and had to go through many demeaning tasks and suffer a great deal of pain before becoming a god. The same goes for Captain America, in a more modernized sense. Before becoming a superhero, he was a weakling that was often made fun of. He was shorter than the average male, a lot

weaker than average, he got picked on and beat up by bullies, he was generally embarrassed and demeaned as Heracles was. And then when he was injected with the formula that gave him superhuman abilities, he was put through an immense amount of pain. While it was for a split second, it still stands that he suffered pain during his final ascension, just as Heracles did.

Iron man (Tony Stark) and Ant-Man (Hank Pym) seem to embody Daedalus. They were mad scientists of a sort, inventors that gave birth to creations of both wonder and horror. Whereas Daedalus gave Icarus wings, Tony Stark created his iron suit that allowed him to fly. Whereas Daedalus gave birth to the monstrosity known as the Minotaur, Hank Pym gave birth to the ultra-powerful AI machine known as Ultron. Ultron was a machine that thought like a human, a humanoid monstrosity much like the Minotaur. If that's not enough, they also created the Vision, a superhero that's both flesh and machine.

Marvel mainly focuses on Greek heroes and less ultra-powerful figures in mythology to model their heroes after. There isn't any hero that really embodies the "great" of the Greek mythology gods such as Zeus or Hades or any of the gods. DC, a subsidiary of Warner Brothers, however, seems to have a mentality that's exactly the opposite of Marvel although the pantheistic view is portrayed in both cases. Almost all of DC's heroes are modelled after Greek gods. I mean, seriously. The Justice League is pretty much the pantheon. The Greek gods live on the top of Mount Olympus, separated from all of the humans. The Justice League lives in the Watchtower in space, completely isolated from humans. Zeus is the leader of the gods, Superman is the leader of the league. Apollo is the god of light, the Green Lantern is the hero of light. Even part of his oath is "Beware my power, green lantern's light!" Those are only similarities on the surface too. Delving into the details, there's a lot more unseen commonalities.

Superman is the obvious parallel to Zeus. While he does have a bit of Achilles in him (only one weakness; kryptonite), he mainly resembles Zeus, the king of the Greek gods in many ways, not just in the fact that they both rule their council. Zeus' position is not totally cemented. There's the constant fear of being usurped by a new ruler or being overthrown by the other gods. Superman isn't an all peaceful leader that's never contested. A lot of his decisions are often questioned, and there's a lot of tension between him and the heroes. Especially Batman, just exactly as the tension that's always between Zeus and Hades. Batman is a parallel of Hades, the Greek god of the underworld and the ruler of the dead. Batman is consistently surrounded by death; his parents died, his friends die often, most of the villains he fights are homicidal maniacs that go on killing sprees rather than trying to dominate the world. His world is pretty grim. On top of that, he's almost constantly secluded in his Bat cave which is conveniently located underground. Hades is the king of the underworld. He's always surrounded by death, he lives underground, and he's almost always by himself. What mostly solidifies Batman and Superman as their godly counterparts,

though is their rivalry. While Superman is the main leader of the league, Batman is often gone to for counsel. Whenever there's a hint of doubt, the other heroes decide to consult Batman. Even when there isn't doubt, sometimes they'll go to him for a better opinion or solution than whatever Superman has offered. However, they don't go to Batman for his counsel because of his personality or character. They simply go to him because they respect him; as much as Superman, if not more. Most heroes don't necessarily like Batman. Even through their tension, though, they still cooperate to complete tasks and get things done. If this isn't a reflection of the relationship that Zeus and Hades share, then I don't know what it is. Hades and Zeus often have a fair bit of conflict, being complete opposites after all. While the other gods don't necessarily hate Hades, they don't really enjoy him either, yet they still respect him. And no matter their differences, Hades and Zeus still work together. Besides these few examples, there are many more heroes that embody the gods. There's the Flash, who embodies Hermes. His ability is being ultra-fast and he even wears something on his suit akin to the feathers on the winged sandals. There's Aquaman, who's very clearly a reference to Poseidon. Both rule over the sea, both wield tridents, and both are more benevolent towards their leader than their brother (well, in Aquaman's case, colleague). There's even a hero named Artemis! She has exceptional skill with the bow and arrow and is even nicknamed the huntress. Perhaps the most interesting of all the parallels, though, would be Wonder Woman.

Wonder Woman, or Princess Diana, is the princess of the Amazons. She boasts of super strength, she can fly, and she is extremely intelligent. Many view her akin to Hera in reference to the justice league, as she seems to be the strongest female and holds the most sway over Superman's opinions and decisions. Things get weird with Wonder Woman though, and here's how. All the others have pretty unique/original origin stories. Superman is an alien, Batman is an orphan with vengeance (and a large amount of money) and the Flash inhaled some super crazy electrocuted water vapours.

Wonder Woman, however, was simply born. Why does this make her special? Well, because her mother is Hippolyta. Yes, the one and the only Hippolyta. Wonder Woman is directly related and intertwined with Greek mythology, whereas all the other superheroes only have perceived links to the Greek gods. Born from Hippolyta as Warrior Princess Diana of Themyscira, she was released to the realm of humans by Hera as champion of the Amazons.

This shows that these movies revive the pantheon that was a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel at the time of the Apostles; the Greco-Roman pantheon that often was intertwined with the Hellenist philosophies of the Stoicks and the Epicureans. In Acts 14:12-13, we read, "And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people."

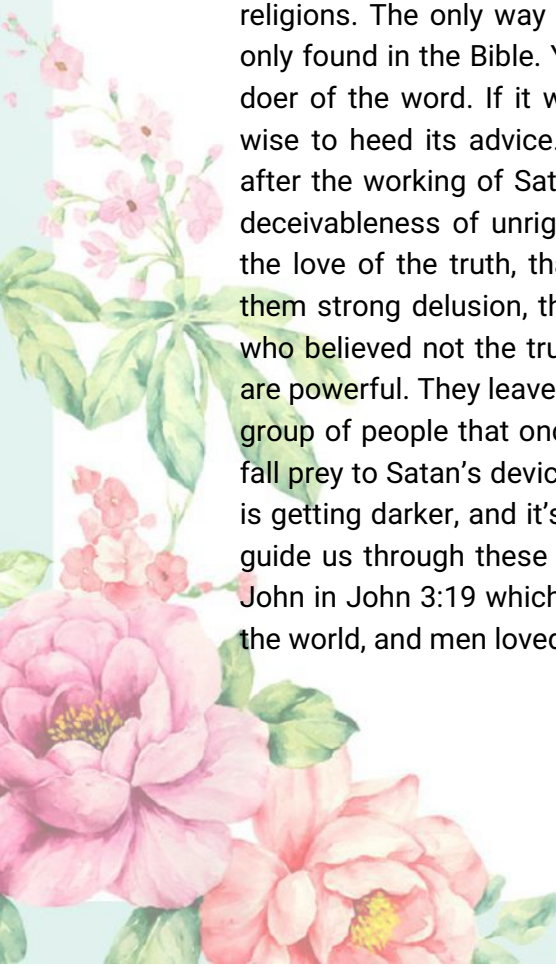
The Bible says in Acts 17:18, "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." The 22nd verse of the same chapter reads, "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." These verses clearly show the superstition of the people during that time with regard to the Greco-Roman pantheon. Large populations even in cities such as Ephesus pledged their allegiance to Greek and Roman gods as shown in Acts 19:35 which reads, "And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?" The movies portraying these gods and goddesses of the Greco-Roman pantheon as supernatural deities lead to a blinding superstition that hinders the spiritual growth in Jesus Christ in the same way that the pantheon hindered the ministerial work of the apostles after the ascension of Christ. God commands us in the first commandment that we should have no other gods before Him.

Inspired by the Eastern Philosophies of Zen Buddhism, Japanese and Chinese movie producers have popularized Asian martial arts into the Western postmodern culture, and in the 21st Century it is in nearly every form of genre in entertainment. The word "Martial" is etymologically related to Mars, the Roman god of war, and the mesmerizing moves of Asian martial arts where nearly every portion of the body becomes a weapon makes a violence look attractive. It can be found in animations, in films and in videogames. Many of the most famous faces in Hollywood have incorporated this into some of their most recent films. While many may think that Asian martial arts is just a fighting technique for self-defense, it is a religion whose iconic emblem is the dragon. The humanist nature worship concepts that are used in films has the same roots of Eastern philosophy as Asian martial arts, the most dominant one being Buddhism (Buddhism teaches self-salvation through nirvana). This religion was introduced into China by an Indian Buddhist monk in the 5th Century AD and he's known as the father of Zen Buddhism, and most if not all of the martial arts superstars are practicing Buddhists. Jet Lee, Steven Seagal, Jackie Chan and Keanu Reeves.

The other form of Eastern Discipline considered to be a system of exercises practiced to promote control of the body and mind is Yoga. This is a New Age Philosophy promoted in Edutainment. Russian mystic Madame Helena Blavatsky who is considered as one of the pioneers who spearheaded the New Age movement introduced and spread the Eastern Philosophies of Yoga through her theosophical society. Thereafter, it was revived under Bruce Lee who taught his Eastern Philosophy to many of the top actors in Hollywood. But what is Yoga? According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, volume 23, p. 895, Yoga is originally one of the six

systems of Indian philosophy. Hatha Yoga is based on a fantastic physiological theory, teaching the existence of a dormant divine potency, called *kundalini*, "the serpent power," at the base of the spine. The aim of the Yogi, according to this system, should be to raise the feminine *kundalini* through the vain *sushumna* from one *chakra* to another until at last it unites with the masculine *sahasrara* when full salvation is achieved. So Yoga philosophy is that salvation can be achieved through your own self by invoking serpent power within. Sounds quite similar to the satanic philosophy Satan introduced to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Manley P. Hall in his book, "The Secret of all Ages" states, "Though the demonism of the Middle Ages seems to have disappeared, there is abundant evidence that in many forms of modern thought – especially the so-called "prosperity" psychology, "will-power-building" metaphysics, and systems of "high-pressure" salesmanship – black magic has merely passed through a metamorphosis, and although the name be changed its nature remains the same."



People often spend most of their time with what they value most. When you consider your relationship with God as the first priority, you'll spend most of your time meditating upon his word but when you put worldly desires before God, you'll spend most of your time watching, listening and speaking worldly things. The field of sports, especially field games such as football and rugby together with their players have become gods to many people who watch these sport activities. The effect of the occult is now seen in this field as many of the players fascinate their fans with Masonic hand signs concealed with their skill. Video games are also a time waster among the youth and majorly the themes portrayed therein are satanic. Get away from such and avoid this delusion and ideas from Satanism and all the other false religions. The only way to stand this delusion is to know the truth, and the truth is only found in the Bible. You must not only hear what it says but you must become a doer of the word. If it warns you against engaging in spiritualism then it would be wise to heed its advice. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 says, "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Movies and songs are powerful. They leave a lasting impression upon the mind. 1 Timothy 4 describes a group of people that once had the faith but left it because of seducing spirits. Don't fall prey to Satan's devices. If it has spiritualism or the occult, don't watch. The world is getting darker, and it's only the true light which is Jesus, not the occult, which will guide us through these trying times. I leave you with this thought from the Apostle John in John 3:19 which says, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."



CHAPTER FOUR

The Dusk of Deception

Section One

The Second Advent of Christ

Many Christians are confident about the return of Jesus. He will come soon. Yet for most of us this “blessed hope” has very little impact on our day-to-day living. Our lives are filled with our daily routine, jobs, plans, projects, and aspirations, trying to fulfill our dreams for the future. Our young people attending church-operated academies, colleges, and universities are choosing careers that will guarantee good-paying, secure jobs. The growing number of our youth who are attending public schools do likewise. They find respectable careers that offer security and a good income. That is their main focus.

A general feeling permeates many of our churches that, as long as you love the Lord, regularly attend church, pay your tithe, respect the Sabbath, assist from time to time with church work, and do not do anything really “bad,” Jesus will take care of you and you will be all right when He returns. Many go beyond this and reason that since we are saved by faith only, not by our works, what we do is not even important. Some feel that we ought not to worry about any special preparations for Jesus’ return, as long as we love Him. Jesus will come at His determined time, and we cannot do anything about it anyway.

But what does the Bible teach about preparing for the Second Advent? Is there any indication that we need to make special preparations for it beyond expressing faith and love in the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Bible reveals that at every major juncture in the history of salvation, God in love informed His people of His plans. Throughout the ages they have found comfort in His promise, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Am 3:7).

Looking at the message and experience of the prophet Elijah, we will examine what the Bible says on the importance of preparing for God’s major events. This will provide us insights on how we ought to prepare for the Second Advent just before us. Throughout history God has sought fellowship with mankind. Through the symbolic worship service of the sacrificial system of the sanctuary He revealed to His covenant people the good news of salvation. He selected spiritual leaders that had the proper qualifications to teach His people how to be saved through His mercy and escape the corruption of sin.

Yet time and time again the people departed from God's law and His testimonies, following the deceptions of Satan and bringing inevitable judgments. In attempting to avert these tragic consequences, God sent His messengers, the prophets, to prepare His people to avoid these judgments by coming back into a covenant relationship with Him.

One of the greatest reformers He used was the prophet Elijah. In a time of deep apostasy God chose him as His special messenger to warn His people of their impending doom. Great was the apathy of the people. Almost single-handedly Elijah faced the nation, denouncing their evil ways and calling them to repentance. His work was to restore among God's people the worship of the true God which foreign worship forms and practices had displaced. He called the people to a radical decision to abandon false worship practices and to return to the Lord. Elijah's message became a pattern for all true reformers. And Scripture links it to both the First and Second Advents of Christ.

Scripture associates the spirit and power of Elijah's message with the work of preparing a people for one of the greatest events in the history of salvation: the First Advent of Christ.

Jesus identified the ministry of John the Baptist as the work that was preparing the people for His first coming. Quoting Malachi 3:1, He told His hearers that John "is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You'" (Mt 11:10, NKJV here and throughout). He added that John was Elijah who was to come (v. 14).

Reinforcing the importance of this work of preparation is the fact that prior to John's birth the angel gave special instruction to his father about John's lifestyle and mission. As to lifestyle, he instructed that John "shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Lk 1:15).

Regarding the nature of John's ministry, the angel said that he "will also go before Him [the Messiah] in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (v. 17). This indicates that John was to be a reformer like Elijah.

The type of preparatory work John would do was similar to that of Elijah's mission. Jesus explained that John was to "restore all things" (Mt 17:11). This restoration characterized the preparatory work of John the Baptist.

Six months before Jesus began His ministry, John began preaching the "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." In fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, Scripture

describes John's ministry as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Lk 3:3-6).

Thus, in the spirit and power of Elijah, John preached a radical reformation, calling on God's people to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (v. 8). It was a message to prepare people for the Messiah's first coming.

The next event of monumental significance after the First Advent is the Second Advent that will bring an end to all sin. If the Scriptures place such importance on the need to prepare for the First Advent, should we not expect to see a similar call to prepare for Christ's Second Advent?

Some very specific Bible prophecies tell of events to unfold just prior to Christ's return. These prophecies demand special preparation on the part of God's people. They tell how to prepare for the climax of the centuries. Failure to take them seriously will cripple our preparation for the Second Advent.

As God sent a message to warn humanity before He destroyed the world by a flood, so He will send a warning message before the destruction of the present world by fire.

Malachi's prophecy about the coming of Elijah before the Day of the Lord was not completely fulfilled at the First Advent of Christ. At that time the great day of judgment, the Day of the Lord, was not imminent. That event would take place at the conclusion of the time of the end. This makes Malachi's prediction very relevant for today.

In harmony with God's promise to send Elijah, the book of Revelation (18:1) reveals that just prior to the destruction of Babylon, the Lord will send a warning message which will enlighten the whole earth with the glory of the Lord, revealing God's purposes and final actions in the great controversy drama and bringing everyone to a decision.

How will He give this warning? Just as He has done throughout history, God will use His faithful remnant to do this unique work. This final demonstration of God's love and His righteousness will be the greatest revival of the centuries, preparing the world for the Second Advent.

Elijah will come by God's raising up messengers in the spirit and power of Elijah to perform a mighty work for the Lord. This work will restore the relevant truth for this time—the present truth, which will prepare the world to be ready for the return of Jesus Christ and provide the means for everyone to escape God's final judgment on unrighteousness.

Jesus' promises and admonitions underscore the seriousness of preparing for the Second Advent. Just before the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus assured His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them in heaven. When this preparation is completed, He will come again to take them to their heavenly homes. Realizing the weaknesses of human nature, Jesus warned His followers not to lose sight of this beautiful promise, diverting their focus from His return to the things that the world considers priorities.

Because no one knows the exact moment of His return, it is easy to get careless during the waiting period. As the antediluvians had neglected to prepare for the flood, Jesus predicted a similar lack of readiness just before His return: "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:37-39).

How can we avoid repeating this sad history? Jesus warns, "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Lk 21:36). He points out the urgency of escaping the coming judgments, to stand before Him when the sky parts and He appears as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19).

The great question for us to consider is the cry of the lost on the Day of the Lord: "Who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:17).

Scripture is plain that failure to watch and pray constantly will lead to such involvement with daily affairs that the Day of the Lord will surprise us as a "thief in the night" (1 Thess 5:2). Jesus strongly urges His followers to make earnest preparations, not to be caught off guard: "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Lk 21:34, 35).

Those who accept His warnings, making serious preparation for His coming, will not be "in darkness" that the close of human probation should surprise them as a thief (1 Thess 5:4).

Jesus calls for us to be ready: "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him" (Mt 24:44). His followers are not only to prepare daily but to be ready at any time.

This calls for serious reflection. If He returned today, would we be ready to meet Him? Are we ready for heaven if death should come upon us today? Are we prepared to

face the judgment? What does the Lord expect of us in this time of preparation? As we noted, Jesus said to watch and pray (Lk 21:36). What does Jesus want us to “watch”? His last sermon on the Mount of Olives clearly urges us to watch the signs of the times of His return. Those who heed this counsel will study the Scriptures to discover the harbingers of the Second Advent. They are people of prophecy, ready to identify every sign Providence gives.

These students of God’s Word will not be fanatical, reading newspapers with paranoia and setting speculative times for the next sign to take place. They will, however, be well acquainted with the Bible’s scenario of the last acts in the great controversy drama.

They will focus on the present truth in prophecy and closely observe how the prophecy of Revelation 13 is being fulfilled. They will watch the astonishing transformation of a country that has been the world’s strongest defender of freedom of religion. They will notice this precious freedom gradually being taken away and a dreadful image of the beast being formed that will persecute God’s people.

In response, they will do everything in their power to defend the divine privilege of all to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. They will tell others of the tragic results of taking away this freedom.

In the light of the Second Advent, what is the meaning of Jesus’ call to pray? While the signs of the times occur in rapid succession, those who pray for Christ’s coming kingdom will call upon Him to establish His kingdom soon. Praying daily “Thy kingdom come” (Mt 6:10) will bring the assurance that no matter how long we have to wait, His kingdom will surely come.

For our encouragement the Lord has given us prophetic signs to keep this promise alive in our minds. Every fulfilling sign will inspire us to greater dedication, remembering the promise to “look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near” (Lk 21:28). These signs of the times make our prayers more intentional and meaningful as they help us to keep the Advent hope alive in our hearts.

Jesus, however, will not inaugurate the kingdom of glory before the preparation for the coming of the Second Advent is done. This work involves first of all a personal preparation, and secondly, a preparation of the whole world to meet the Lord. The life and work of Elijah, one of God’s most outstanding reformers, reveals our work of preparing for the Second Advent.

Malachi prophesied, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” (Mal 4:5, 6).

Here Elijah is a type or symbol of the work that prepares people to meet the Lord at His coming. This prophecy gives us a glimpse of God’s compassion for the world, in

which He brings about a work that is to prepare the people for the Day of Judgment so that they can escape the seven last plagues.

Malachi's prophecy makes it clear that Elijah's work will change the hearts of God's people. It will bring about a reformation that prepares people for the Day of the Lord and Christ's return.

The prophet Elijah lived in a time of great apostasy. At the head of this apostasy were the leaders of God's people, who had departed from the truth more than any others before them. Scripture stated, "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him" (1 Kgs 16:30). This situation brought on God's wrath: "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (v. 33).

The spiritual and moral decline among God's people did not take place suddenly but gradually. It began with Solomon, deepened with Jeroboam, and reached its awful depth in Elijah's time. What were some of the departures that led to such apostasy? Departure from the truth began a century earlier with Solomon, reputed to be the wisest man on earth. In spite of his fame he fell into sin by disregarding the plain counsels of Scripture regarding life's most intimate relationship—marriage. His personal passions took priority over the principles of Scripture, and he departed from the biblical principles of the marriage relation, taking multiple wives, among them even unbelievers.

The Bible records this strong censure: "But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' Solomon clung to these in love" (1 Kgs 11:1, 2).

These intimate relations with unbelievers led him astray in the end. "For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David" (v. 4).

How did this happen? To please his unbelieving wives, he not only allowed them to have their own worship preferences, but he took an ecumenical attitude and personally participated in these deviant forms of worship. The Scriptures, however, judge his behavior as totally unacceptable, stating bluntly, "Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord" (v. 6).

With the next king, Jeroboam, the apostasy deepened. This king was not satisfied to have his people faithfully worship their God and attend the religious services in the house of the Lord. Jealously he surmised that if his subjects attended the annual religious festivals in Jerusalem he would lose his popularity, the people's support, and finally his job.

To prevent the people from worshiping in Judea, Jeroboam decided to compete with the Jerusalem church by offering an alternative worship that would be easier and less demanding than the traditional worship that God had outlined to His prophets. Thus he “made two calves of gold, and said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt. And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan” (1 Kgs 12:28, 29).

Jeroboam next lowered the standards for spiritual leadership. The Bible gives no reason for his actions, but one may safely assume that not everyone went along with his plans for revised worship. In order to attract sufficient new leadership for the new worship styles, he disregarded the biblical requirements for leadership. Scripture states that the king “made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi” (v. 31).

Personal ambitions or desires, not Scripture, became the standard for qualifying as a spiritual leader. Thus the king would set apart or ordain anyone who felt “called” to lead God’s people: “Whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places” (1 Kgs 13:33). Most people saw nothing wrong with these changes, but Scripture saw it differently: “And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam” (v. 34).

In the time of Elijah, the fear of the Lord had diminished so much that God’s people were no longer concerned about the false worship forms. These had become a light matter, firmly established and nothing to worry about. Commenting on the attitude of leadership, Scripture states, “And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him [Ahab] to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and went and served Baal and worshiped him” (1 Kgs 16:31).

The driving force behind the new worship trends came from the powerful influences of the pagan nations’ worship practices. Israel’s leader loved what he saw in one of these nations so much that he did not see anything wrong in making an alliance through marriage. This alliance impacted his personal life and the life of the nation. “But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up” (1 Kgs 21:25). This intimate relationship with an unbeliever paved the way for one of the deepest apostasies among God’s people.

Israel’s experience shows that the type of leadership determines the “success” of apostasy. The new worship styles required a specialized “ministry,” leaders who had been trained by the fallen nations in these worship styles. They facilitated the adoption of worship practices foreign to the heritage of God’s people. Scripture informs us that there were “the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four

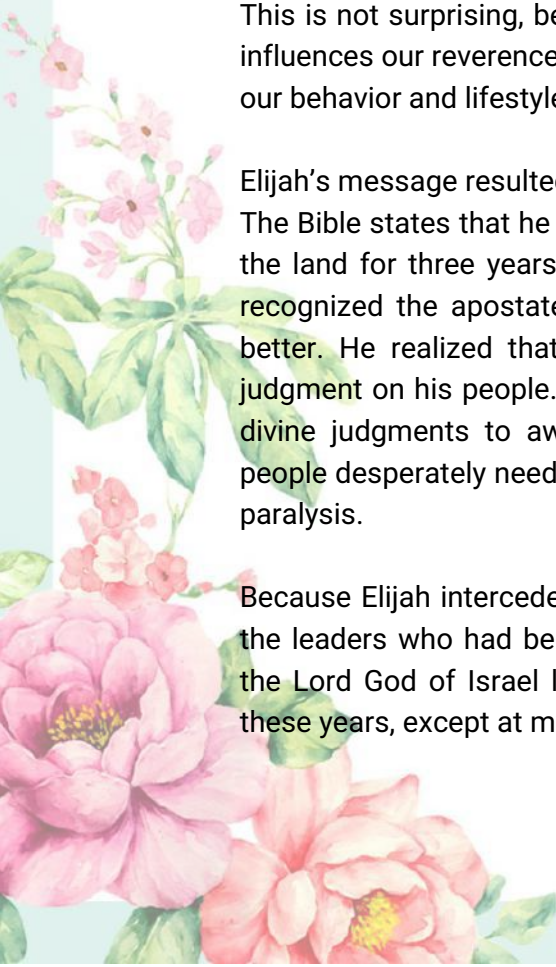
hundred prophets of Asherah.” The national leadership favored these priests skilled in the pagan worship styles—they ate “at Jezebel’s table” (1 Kgs 18:19). With such a force of false teachers one can understand the full-scale apostasy in Elijah’s time.

The national leadership strongly promoted the new worship forms. Any defense of God’s worship style was politically incorrect. Truth was unpopular and its defenders were persecuted. So many feared to stand up for the truth that Elijah felt that he was the only one left faithful to the Lord. Seeing no sign of public support, he shared his disappointment with the Lord: “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life” (1 Kgs 19:10).

Leadership was determined to make the new worship styles a success. Traditional worship services were no longer tolerated, and strong action was taken to eliminate any opposition. Systematic persecution began against God’s faithful ministers: “Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord” (1 Kgs 18:13). When God used Elijah to bring about a revival and reformation, Jezebel issued a death decree against him: “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them [the prophets of Baal who were killed] by tomorrow about this time” (1 Kgs 19:2).

Although they did not dare to speak up openly, God still had believers who refused to participate in the popular worship forms. The Lord comforted Elijah, saying, “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him” (v. 18).

These examples show clearly that apostasy leads to a change in the style of worship. This is not surprising, because apostasy affects the way we view God, which in turn influences our reverence for Him, how we communicate and relate to Him, and finally, our behavior and lifestyle, even in worship.



Elijah’s message resulted from his prayers and his intimate relationship with the Lord. The Bible states that he “prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months” (James 5:17). This prayer shows that he recognized the apostate condition of his people and longed for a change for the better. He realized that such a change could only come as the result of divine judgment on his people. Thus he interceded with God for his own people, calling for divine judgments to awaken them from their apathy towards the apostasy. The people desperately needed to hear a straight testimony that would cure their spiritual paralysis.

Because Elijah interceded, the Lord sent him a message of judgment to proclaim to the leaders who had been promoting the new worship styles. He said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word” (1 Kgs 17:1).

Scripture clearly states that rain was one of the blessings of obedience: "And it shall be that if you diligently obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land in its season . . ." (Deut 11:13-15).

Since the time of Moses, Scripture had pointed out that a departure from the true worship of God leads to disaster: "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you" (vv. 16, 17).

The judgments that the Elijah message announced were simply the result of departing from God's counsels and following the worship of the apostate nations around them.

After Israel suffered from years of famine, Elijah appeared again in public and pointed to the real reason for the present calamity. Elijah's message was clear and direct: they had failed to follow the plain counsels of the Lord. In addressing Ahab, he said, "you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals" (1 Kgs 18:18).

Elijah knew that the issues dividing God's people needed clear identification and decisive action. No politically correct positions for the sake of preserving peace would do.

Elijah called for a general conference of all believers to bring an open confrontation between true and false worship. He invited everyone to Mount Carmel to investigate the worth of the false and true worship forms. He commanded, "Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah" (1 Kgs 18:19).

The meeting Elijah called for had to produce results. Thus he appealed to everyone to take a firm position on the issue of worship. The message called on the people to give up their indecisiveness and to take sides openly, no longer remaining neutral. "And Elijah came to all the people, and said, 'How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.' But the people answered him not a word" (v. 21).

During the investigation Elijah's message exposed the error of false worship. He showed the utter bankruptcy of the new worship forms, calling to the false prophets, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping, and must be awakened" (v. 27).

After having demonstrated the utter failure of the apostate practices and teachings, Elijah's message arrived at its ultimate objective: restoring God's true worship.

The first thing, therefore, that Elijah did was to call the people together and restore the foundations of true worship, the altar around which all worship of God centered. "And Elijah said to all the people, 'Come near to me.' So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down" (v. 30). Here on the altar the only sacrifice for sin is lifted up before every worshiper, calling attention to the ultimate price that was paid for our redemption.

Such simple, uncomplicated worship leads people into a new covenant relationship through deep repentance and affliction of soul. The new covenant brings the worshiper into a relationship of loving obedience to the Lamb of God who takes away our sins. The worshiper asks what is pleasing to God and how He wants to be worshiped as Creator, not what kind of worship style we like or prefer and what makes us feel comfortable.

When the people saw the result of Elijah's message of true worship, "they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, He is God! the Lord, He is God!'" (v. 39).

Elijah's message did not simply restore genuine worship practices, it did away with all apostate teachings. The false teachings and teachers had to be eliminated from among God's people. When the false teachers offered no sign of repentance, Elijah called on God's people for a radical removal of the sources of apostasy, commanding, "'Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!' So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there" (v. 40).

The results of the Elijah message are impressive. It "will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" (Mal 4:6). This message leads to bridging any gap in family relations. Fully accepted, it brings unity instead of separation. It leads to reconciliation, stops divorce proceedings, ends lawsuits between God's people, and rejuvenates family happiness, for where Jesus rules, happiness reigns supreme. The result will be a home that is truly a heaven on earth, a model of Christian love, and the most powerful demonstration of what God can accomplish in families.

The heart-changing influence of the message has even deeper consequences. Malachi stated that the message "will turn . . . the hearts of the children to their fathers." In the end-time setting, this means that it would lead people to return to the faith of their fathers—the simple but powerful faith of the early church as well as a revival of the faith of the Protestant reformers.

In the pioneer experiences we see the power of the Holy Spirit especially at work, and

we see the message and mission that God has given to His remnant. Understanding God's original purpose for His people in preparing the way for Jesus' return will bring a revival. We will also better understand how to fulfill the task that lies before us. Truly, we have nothing to fear for the future, unless we have forgotten God's leading and teaching in the history of His people.

Elijah's message did not go unopposed. The public exposure and resultant failure of the apostate worship brought violent reaction—persecution.

After Elijah's message at Mount Carmel, Jezebel tried to kill him. He explained his desperate situation to the Lord, stating, "they seek to take my life" (1 Kgs 19:10). The promoters of the false worship styles tried to destroy God's messenger and the message of reform he bore, but the Almighty protected him and he continued unharmed.

Proclaiming the message of reform brought rich results. Faithful Elijah was translated to heaven. "Suddenly, a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, . . . and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kgs 2:11).

When God's people go forward in the spirit and power of Elijah, faithfully presenting an unadulterated message, their work will have an effect similar to that of Elijah's message on his generation. In the same way, our faithfulness in proclaiming the three angels' messages will receive abundant reward when we enter the glorious heavenly mansions the Lord is preparing.

Bible prophecy says the Elijah message will be proclaimed just before the Day of the Lord, which begins with the seven last plagues. This message will be given by a people who will go forward in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare a people ready for the Second Advent.

Section Two

The Dusk of Deception

When Jesus Christ comes the second time, the saved reconnect with God, Satan and his followers are trapped on earth by themselves and after a thousand years, God resurrects the lost for the final judgement before destroying sin and sinners.

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close, Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.) This is the Dusk of Deception.

At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels. As He descends in terrific majesty He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom. They come forth, a mighty host, numberless as the sands of the sea. What a contrast to those who were raised at the first resurrection! The righteous were clothed with immortal youth and beauty. The wicked bear the traces of disease and death.

Every eye in that vast multitude is turned to behold the glory of the Son of God. With one voice the wicked hosts exclaim: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" It is not love to Jesus that inspires this utterance. The force of truth urges the words from unwilling lips. As the wicked went into their graves, so they come forth with the same enmity to Christ and the same spirit of rebellion. They are to have no new probation in which to remedy the defects of their past lives. Nothing would be gained by this. A lifetime of transgression has not softened their hearts. A second probation, were it given them, would be occupied as was the first in evading the requirements of God and exciting rebellion against Him.

Christ descends upon the Mount of Olives, whence, after His resurrection, He ascended, and where angels repeated the promise of His return. Says the prophet: "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, . . . and there shall be a very great

valley." "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." Zechariah 14:5, 4, 9. As the New Jerusalem, in its dazzling splendor, comes down out of heaven, it rests upon the place purified and made ready to receive it, and Christ, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.

Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy. While deprived of his power and cut off from his work of deception, the prince of evil was miserable and dejected; but as the wicked dead are raised and he sees the vast multitudes upon his side, his hopes revive, and he determines not to yield the great controversy. He will marshal all the armies of the lost under his banner and through them endeavor to execute his plans. The wicked are Satan's captives. In rejecting Christ they have accepted the rule of the rebel leader. They are ready to receive his suggestions and to do his bidding. Yet, true to his early cunning, he does not acknowledge himself to be Satan. He claims to be the prince who is the rightful owner of the world and whose inheritance has been unlawfully wrested from him. He represents himself to his deluded subjects as a redeemer, assuring them that his power has brought them forth from their graves and that he is about to rescue them from the most cruel tyranny. The presence of Christ having been removed, Satan works wonders to support his claims. He makes the weak strong and inspires all with his own spirit and energy. He proposes to lead them against the camp of the saints and to take possession of the City of God. With fiendish exultation he points to the unnumbered millions who have been raised from the dead and declares that as their leader he is well able to overthrow the city and regain his throne and his kingdom.

In that vast throng are multitudes of the long-lived race that existed before the Flood; men of lofty stature and giant intellect, who, yielding to the control of fallen angels, devoted all their skill and knowledge to the exaltation of themselves; men whose wonderful works of art led the world to idolize their genius, but whose cruelty and evil inventions, defiling the earth and defacing the image of God, caused Him to blot them from the face of His creation. There are kings and generals who conquered nations, valiant men who never lost a battle, proud, ambitious warriors whose approach made kingdoms tremble. In death these experienced no change. As they come up from the grave, they resume the current of their thoughts just where it ceased. They are actuated by the same desire to conquer that ruled them when they fell.

Satan consults with his angels, and then with these kings and conquerors and mighty men. They look upon the strength and numbers on their side, and declare that the army within the city is small in comparison with theirs, and that it can be overcome. They lay their plans to take possession of the riches and glory of the New Jerusalem. All immediately begin to prepare for battle. Skillful artisans construct implements of war. Military leaders, famed for their success, marshal the throngs of warlike men into companies and divisions.

At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on--an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth's broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.

Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. The brightness of His presence fills the City of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance.

Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, . . . before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Revelation 7:9. Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs.

The redeemed raise a song of praise that echoes and re-echoes through the vaults of heaven: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Verse 10. And angel and seraph unite their voices in adoration. As the redeemed have beheld the power and malignity of Satan, they have seen, as never before, that no power but that of Christ could have made them conquerors. In all that shining throng there are none to ascribe salvation to themselves, as if they had prevailed by their own power and goodness. Nothing is said of what they have done or suffered; but the burden of every song, the keynote of every anthem, is: Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb.

In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people. Says the prophet of God: "I saw a great white throne, and Him

that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:11, 12.

As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just where their feet diverged from the path of purity and holiness, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God. The seductive temptations which they encouraged by indulgence in sin, the blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by the stubborn, unrepentant heart—all appear as if written in letters of fire.

Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a panoramic view appear the scenes of Adam's temptation and fall, and the successive steps in the great plan of redemption. The Saviour's lowly birth; His early life of simplicity and obedience; His baptism in Jordan; the fast and temptation in the wilderness; His public ministry, unfolding to men heaven's most precious blessings; the days crowded with deeds of love and mercy, the nights of prayer and watching in the solitude of the mountains; the plottings of envy, hate, and malice which repaid His benefits; the awful, mysterious agony in Gethsemane beneath the crushing weight of the sins of the whole world; His betrayal into the hands of the murderous mob; the fearful events of that night of horror—the unresisting prisoner, forsaken by His best-loved disciples, rudely hurried through the streets of Jerusalem; the Son of God exultingly displayed before Annas, arraigned in the high priest's palace, in the judgment hall of Pilate, before the cowardly and cruel Herod, mocked, insulted, tortured, and condemned to die—all are vividly portrayed.

And now before the swaying multitude are revealed the final scenes—the patient Sufferer treading the path to Calvary; the Prince of heaven hanging upon the cross; the haughty priests and the jeering rabble deriding His expiring agony; the supernatural darkness; the heaving earth, the rent rocks, the open graves, marking the moment when the world's Redeemer yielded up His life.

The awful spectacle appears just as it was. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. Each actor recalls the part which he performed. Herod, who slew the innocent children of Bethlehem that he might destroy the King of Israel; the base Herodias, upon whose guilty soul rests the blood of John the Baptist; the weak, timeserving Pilate; the mocking soldiers; the priests and rulers and the maddened throng who cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"—all behold the enormity of their guilt. They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Saviour's feet, exclaiming: "He died for me!"

Amid the ransomed throng are the apostles of Christ, the heroic Paul, the ardent Peter, the loved and loving John, and their truehearted brethren, and with them the vast host of martyrs; while outside the walls, with every vile and abominable thing, are those by whom they were persecuted, imprisoned, and slain. There is Nero, that monster of cruelty and vice, beholding the joy and exaltation of those whom he once tortured, and in whose extremest anguish he found satanic delight. His mother is there to witness the result of her own work; to see how the evil stamp of character transmitted to her son, the passions encouraged and developed by her influence and example, have borne fruit in crimes that caused the world to shudder.

There are papist priests and prelates, who claimed to be Christ's ambassadors, yet employed the rack, the dungeon, and the stake to control the consciences of His people. There are the proud pontiffs who exalted themselves above God and presumed to change the law of the Most High. Those pretended fathers of the church have an account to render to God from which they would fain be excused. Too late they are made to see that the Omniscient One is jealous of His law and that He will in no wise clear the guilty. They learn now that Christ identifies His interest with that of His suffering people; and they feel the force of His own words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.

The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them.

It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory was despised when offered them; but how desirable it now appears. "All this," cries the lost soul, "I might have had; but I chose to put these things far from me. Oh, strange infatuation! I have exchanged peace, happiness, and honor for wretchedness, infamy, and despair." All see that their exclusion from heaven is just. By their lives they have declared: "We will not have this Man [Jesus] to reign over us."

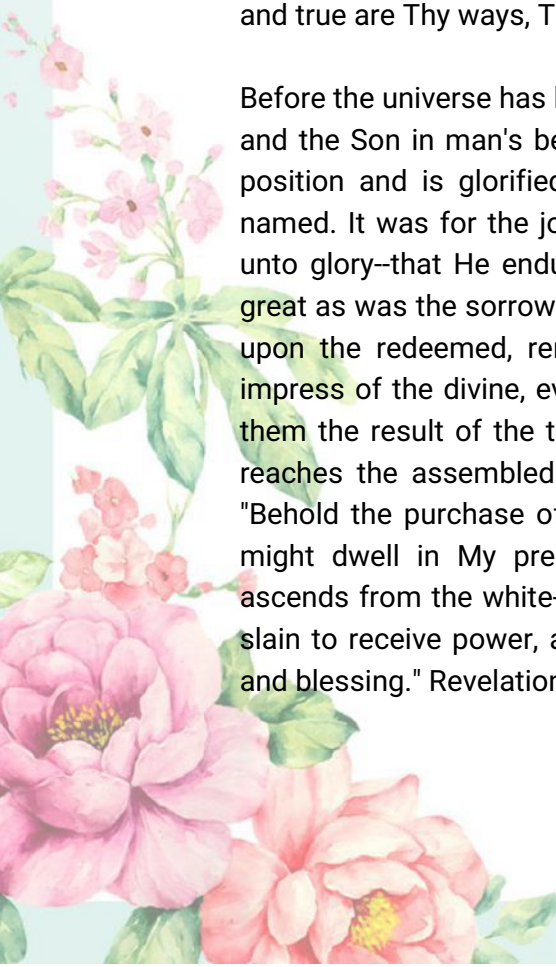
As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God. They see in His hands the tables of the divine law, the statutes which they have despised and transgressed. They witness the outburst of wonder, rapture, and adoration from the saved; and as the wave of melody sweeps over the multitudes without the city, all with one voice exclaim, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3); and, falling prostrate, they worship the Prince of life.

Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. He who was

once a covering cherub remembers whence he has fallen. A shining seraph, "son of the morning," how changed, how degraded! From the council where once he was honored, he is forever excluded. He sees another now standing near to the Father, veiling His glory. He has seen the crown placed upon the head of Christ by an angel of lofty stature and majestic presence, and he knows that the exalted position of this angel might have been his.

Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture. His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence.

"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." Verse 4. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan's rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee." Psalm 145:10. The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created. With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints."



Before the universe has been clearly presented the great sacrifice made by the Father and the Son in man's behalf. The hour has come when Christ occupies His rightful position and is glorified above principalities and powers and every name that is named. It was for the joy that was set before Him—that He might bring many sons unto glory—that He endured the cross and despised the shame. And inconceivably great as was the sorrow and the shame, yet greater is the joy and the glory. He looks upon the redeemed, renewed in His own image, every heart bearing the perfect impress of the divine, every face reflecting the likeness of their King. He beholds in them the result of the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied. Then, in a voice that reaches the assembled multitudes of the righteous and the wicked, He declares: "Behold the purchase of My blood! For these I suffered, for these I died, that they might dwell in My presence throughout eternal ages." And the song of praise ascends from the white-robed ones about the throne: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Revelation 5:12.

Notwithstanding that Satan has been constrained to acknowledge God's justice and to bow to the supremacy of Christ, his character remains unchanged. The spirit of rebellion, like a mighty torrent, again bursts forth. Filled with frenzy, he determines not to yield the great controversy. The time has come for a last desperate struggle against the King of heaven. He rushes into the midst of his subjects and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there are none now to acknowledge his supremacy. His power is at an end. The wicked are filled with the same hatred of God that inspires Satan; but they see that their case is hopeless, that they cannot prevail against Jehovah. Their rage is kindled against Satan and those who have been his agents in deception, and with the fury of demons they turn upon them.

Saith the Lord: "Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit." "I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. . . . I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Ezekiel 28:6-8, 16-19.

"Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." "The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter." "Upon the wicked He shall rain quick burning coals, fire and brimstone and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Isaiah 9:5; 34:2; Psalm 11:6, margin. Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up. Malachi 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10. The earth's surface seems one molten mass--a vast, seething lake of fire. It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men--"the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." Isaiah 34:8.

The wicked receive their recompense in the earth. Proverbs 11:31. They "shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts." Malachi 4:1. Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished "according to their deeds." The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are

at last destroyed, root and branch--Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.

Satan's work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they [the righteous] break forth into singing." Isaiah 14:7. And a shout of praise and triumph ascends from the whole loyal universe. "The voice of a great multitude," "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings," is heard, saying: "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Revelation 19:6.

While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power. While God is to the wicked a consuming fire, He is to His people both a sun and a shield. Revelation 20:6; Psalm 84:11.

